

Ercon placed into liquidation after 'financial difficulties'

20 JOBS AXED AT TOWN ENGINEERS

Report by Carl Jackson

AN engineering firm in Willenhall has been placed into liquidation putting more than 20 people out of work.

Staff at Ercon Finishing Systems, at Willenhall Trading Estate, in Mid-Staffordshire were told their jobs were at risk at a meeting on Friday but on Monday directors broke the news their employment had been terminated.

The company cited 'financial difficulties' as its reason for ceasing to trade, warning staff that they were no longer in a position to make payments to them.

In letters to employees Director Ian Francis said: "I regret that, because of the company's financial difficulties, it has been necessary for the directors to take steps to place the company into liquidation. The company is no longer in a position to make payments to you and should therefore consider your contract of employment terminated with effect from today's date."

He added: "The directors sincerely regret having to make this decision, but we are unable to continue to provide financial support to Ercon through the quiet period. I have enjoyed working with the Ercon employees over the last few years and I would also like to thank you personally for the effort you have put into the company."

Creditors

Ercon had operated for more than two decades providing finishing plants and equipment for clients throughout the UK and abroad. A liquidator is now being sought while Manchester-based RSM Restructuring Advisory are holding talks with creditors and preparing a statement of affairs.

One worker who did not want to be named said: "This has been coming, I think we all feel that. Orders have been getting smaller and smaller and you hear all sorts of rumours about financial issues at the highest level."

"It is a shock to hear but there might not be much that we can do. You build up relationships at work so for us all to find out together was difficult."

Councillor Sean Coughlan, who represents the Willenhall area for Walsall Council, said he was not aware of any troubles at the firm but lamented the loss of jobs.

He said: "Any job loss in Willenhall is detrimental to the town. I keep saying to people the thing that made Willenhall great was that it had lots of factories generating lots of jobs which in turn meant people spent their money in the town. Most of our major job losses were in the 1990s when the lock industry changed."

JAYNE HOPES FOR CAPITAL GAIN TO HELP CAUSE



Jayne Whitehouse, from Walsall, who is running the London Marathon, seen with her daughter Faith, 11, who has diabetes

A MOTHER hopes to help raise more than £400,000 to find a diabetes cure by running in the London Marathon. Jayne Whitehouse, whose daughter was diagnosed with the illness aged three, is part of the JD RF team.

Mrs Whitehouse, aged 42, from Walsall, has a personal fundraising target of £1,500 and will join 180 fellow JD RF runners on April 24.

The charity raises money to plough back into the research to try to find a cure for type one diabetes. Mrs Whitehouse, whose daughter, Faith, is now aged 11, said she wanted to inspire fellow sufferers and their families to

turn a negative situation into a positive one. She said: "When I was 10-years-old I was diagnosed with asthma and couldn't run very well. Faith was diagnosed at the age of three and having witnessed me take on such gruelling training she is now really active herself."

"Her illness does not stop her from achieving everything she wants to do. This will be my second marathon and I am constantly running half marathons and raising money for the charity by hosting quizzes."

Mrs Whitehouse, who works as a legal secretary, said although training for the 26.2

mile run had been tough at times in the cold, dark winter months she could always find motivation by looking at her daughter. Having seen Faith endure so much with her illness proves the only motivation I need," she said.

Luan Roberts, senior challenge events fundraiser at JD RF, said running the London Marathon was a brilliant way to raise awareness of type one diabetes. She said: "It's a serious and complex condition. To sponsor Mrs Whitehouse visit www.justgiving.com/Jaynemarkfaithrun

POLITICS

Councillor hits out at £9m EU leaflet costs

A WALSALL councillor has blasted the Prime Minister over plans to spend £9 million on leaflets for every UK household backing the 'In' campaign ahead of the EU referendum.

Walsall Democratic Labour councillor Pete Smith said: "The cynical attempt by the Prime minister to spend £9m of taxpayers money in order to pile up the propaganda on behalf of the Remain in the EU camp, is nothing short of a disgrace."

"If the Prime Minister is so convinced that this extra amount of money is needed to shore up the flagging 'Remain' campaign, maybe he could have a word with some of the off-shore tax dodgers to cough up the cash instead of the taxpayers."

COUNCIL

Weeks left to have your say on issues

RESIDENTS still have nearly a month to have their say on plans for new homes and permanent traveller sites in Walsall.

Walsall Council, who is carrying out the consultation on its site allocation document, has thanked residents for their feedback. Consultation includes potential sites for 2,000 homes and options for permanent traveller sites.

The consultation period closes on May 3, with the plans available to view at www.walsall.gov.uk/planning_2026

ROW

Mobile phone mast plan sparks outcry

CONTROVERSIAL plans to build a 17.5 metre-high phone mast next to a Great Barr church have been lodged.

Telecommunications company Vodafone wants to install the mast on the pavement outside The Beacon Church in Hillingford Avenue. It would feature a 300mm dish and two equipment cabinets.

Councillor Adrian Andrew, said: "People are not happy about the plans, there is a lot of strong feeling against it. It is vitally important that people make sure they have their say and make their feelings known."

INSIDE

Amy watching the birdies at theatre



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Councillor welcomes sale of shops



Part of the Colman Centre

A ROW of shops in Darlaston town centre have gone on the market for nearly £800,000 – and councillors have welcomed the sale.

The Colman Centre, which includes Boots the chemist, currently brings in £66,900 per year in rent and the leases would continue as part of the sale.

Walsall Hospice, Walsall Housing Group and Coopers Family Butchers also rent units in the centre, while a fifth is currently empty.

Councillor Paul Bott, independent councillor for the Darlaston ward, said: “I would be pleased if a new buyer came

in to Darlaston. It has been stagnate for a number of years. There has been no regeneration with the shops and businesses to get it thriving again.

“It just seems to be charity shops whereas before it was local people running local businesses. When the shops and families moved it never recovered.”

Darlaston councillor Doug James said a sale had the potential to be a ‘good thing’ but more needed to be done to help the town centre. He said: “In Darlaston we have got a surplus of hairdressers, nail bars, tattoo shops and fast food outlets. It tends to be quick

rents but this leads to an over-reliance on low rent and fast turnaround shops, which is not what the town centre needs.

“We need a range of retail shops to get people to come and shop in Darlaston, and we need to offer these shops reasonable rent. With a new owner coming in we need to move on but the fact is that smaller towns across Walsall are missing out through the central regeneration schemes.

“This could be a good thing but by itself it’s not going to be enough.”

Centre owners declined to comment.

Payout follows hospital death of cancer patient

THE family of a cancer patient whose catheter was left detached for two days before his death, has received an out of court settlement from Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.

Willenhall man George Griffin was overcoming severe bladder cancer after having an operation to remove a tumour followed by three bouts of chemotherapy.

The 71-year-old was admitted to Walsall Manor Hospital several months after the surgery with abdominal pain and was given an IV drip.

But the former factory foreman’s nephrostomy tube – which drains urine from the kidney – somehow became detached causing him to become overloaded with fluids which medical lawyers argued would have put ‘excessive strain’ on his heart and respiratory system. It was 48 hours before staff noticed and it was replaced.

Mr Griffin’s kidneys began to fail and four days after being admitted he suffered a heart attack and died. His wife Joyce said: “We have really struggled to come to terms with George’s death as it was so unexpected. We were married for 47 years and he was my best friend. We are so disappointed with the treatment George received at Walsall Manor Hospital.”

Now, several years on from Mr Griffin’s death in December 2011, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust has agreed a settlement with his family after they pursued legal action, although the trust has not admitted any fault.

Joyce added: “As a family we are incredibly upset that the NHS Trust didn’t admit responsibility for any element of George’s care or death but we hope that highlighting the problems he had at the hospital will ensure that lessons are learned.”

Amir Khan medical director at the trust, said: “We would like to express our sympathy to the Griffin family and offer our sincere condolences for the loss that they have suffered. The Trust always endeavours to provide the highest quality of care to all of its patients.”

Protest over effects of bus service axe



Councillors Paul, right, and Chris Bott, centre, with residents unhappy about the potential removal of the bus service

PROTESTERS came out to fight the possible cancellation of a ‘crucial’ bus service.

The number 38 provides a vital lifeline for elderly residents in and around Parklands Road, Kings Hill and Darlaston Road, users have said.

But National Express is considering stopping the bus service, a move which Councillor Paul Bott said would trap pensioners in their homes. He said: “It’s no good having a bus pass if you don’t have any buses around. Without the 38,

a good many of these pensioners wouldn’t get out of their houses. They can get into Darlaston, which supports the town and local businesses. If they make their way out there, they’ve got to come back, and they just wouldn’t manage to get to Kingshill at all.

“It’d mean the cost of taxis, and their pensions don’t run to hiring taxis.” Councillor Bott said it isn’t the first time they’ve had to fight to make sure there’s a bus available for pensioners in the area. He and his wife, Councillor Chris Bott,

helped to restore the service when it was removed several years ago.

He said: “We lobbied the council, protested, launched petitions and they reinstated the service.”

Ali Bell, a spokesperson for National Express, said: “Route 38 is part of a consultation that has only just closed, so no decisions have been made yet.

“The proposals mean that the 38 would be replaced by an extension to the 75 service. The number of buses between Wednesbury and Darlaston would stay the same.”

£400 boost for church from firm for storage

A PROPERTY developer in Bloxwich has donated £400 to a church to provide purpose-built storage facilities for the community groups it plays host to.

Members of St John’s Methodist Church in Victoria Avenue contacted Walton Homes after hearing about its 30 Wishes campaign, launched last year to mark 30 years in business.

The initiative was introduced to provide support to 30 charities, organisations or individuals within the West Midlands. Since then, Walton Homes has granted various wishes to deserving applicants including Acorns Hospice, primary schools, the RNLI, a cat’s protection group and the Canal Trust.

Pauline Osbaldeston, a member of the property committee of the church, said: “Our outdated storage facilities are no longer adequate for all of the community groups we support here and we asked Walton Homes if it might be able to help us address that.

“We host a whole range of community groups here; rainbows to senior guides, beavers to senior scouts, an art club, a railway club, an activity group and a young church group.

“This year, we’re celebrating our 50th anniversary, yet some of the storage in the old part of our building dates back further, so we were delighted when Walton Homes stepped in to help.”

Amy Summerton, director of Walton Homes, added: “St John’s Methodist Church provides a much-needed resource for a whole range of local community groups.”

600 homes due on new estates

MORE than 600 council homes will be built in Sandwell under ambitious plans which aim to ease the borough’s housing crisis. The Changing the Housing Landscape scheme will look to see new estates created in towns across the area over the next three years to 2018-2019.

Council chiefs are anxious to increase the number of council properties, with more than 6,000 people currently on a waiting list.

Acting leader of Sandwell Council Steve Eling said: “I commend the investment strategy of the council – it’s a forward thinking housing package that will serve the needs of the people of Sandwell for decades to come.”

“We’re looking to provide good quality social housing at a fair rate as the demand increases.”

St George's Day concert by choirs

TWO leading Black Country male voice choirs, Coseley and Walsall Harmonic are joining forces in a concert for St George’s Day in Wednesbury Town Hall on Saturday, April 23, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 on the door. Refreshments will be available.

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Gang with machetes target flat of pensioner

AN EYE-WITNESS told of the terrifying moment a machete-wielding gang confronted his customers after breaking into a Walsall flat and threatened an 84-year-old woman.

The eight-strong gang forced their way into the pensioner's home in Darlaston Road at around 9.30pm on Monday while her son, who also lives there, was out.

They kicked the side door in and one of them went upstairs and into the woman's bedroom. But, fortunately for her, men from the Nutan Social Club on the opposite side of the road scared them off.

Anant Patel, owner of the club, said: "What happened was one of my customers had just been out to have a smoke and he heard something bang. He came back inside and told me it sounded like someone was trying to break in. I went over there to see what was going on and about eight or nine guys from the club followed me out to back me up."

He added: "Eight guys came out, three black, five white. Two of them had knives that looked like machetes. They had six or seven-inch blades. Unfortunately the lady was in there, and I think they actually got into her room. No-one was hurt as far as I'm aware though."

West Midlands Police spokesman Brigg Ford said: "There was a confrontation that wasn't physical. We don't believe the lady was targeted or that they planned to burgle her flat. Both cars were driven off in the direction of Darlaston."

Soccer fan gets ban for assault

A WALSALL football fan has been banned from football matches for five years for assaulting a steward.

Daniel James McCarthy, aged 25, of Walsall Wood Road, Walsall, pleaded guilty to the offence which took place at the Proact Stadium on Saturday, March 12, during a match between Chesterfield and Walsall.

Mr McCarthy attended Chesterfield Justice Centre on Tuesday, March 29 and magistrates also sentenced Mr McCarthy to an 18 week prison sentence, suspended for one year.

He is also required to complete 80 hours unpaid work and to pay £100 compensation to the victim, along with £85 court costs. Pc Roger Brown said: "I hope this sends out a clear message that when appropriate we

Travellers' rubbish weekend removal

RUBBISH left behind by travellers was removed at the weekend. Walsall Council's Clean and Green team started the clean-up at Broadway West playing fields after the group arrived on Monday and left the next day.

£1.5 million to help improve roads

POTHOLE-BUSTING funding worth more than £1.5 million is heading to the Black Country and Staffordshire to fix the region's crumbling roads.

The four Black Country local authorities plus Staffordshire County Council have been given the slice of £50 million which was set aside to repair nearly one million potholes across the country over the next 12 months.

Staffordshire gets the largest pot - worth £1,069,000 - which will allow 20,170 potholes to be filled. In the Black Country, Dudley gets £172,000 to fix 3,245 potholes, while Sandwell gets £160,000 to fill 3,019.

Walsall Council has been given £140,000 to fill 2,642 potholes and Wolverhampton gets the least

with £110,000 to repair 2,072 potholes. Overall, 13 councils in the West Midlands will get £5.7m to tackle our battered roads, streets and highways.

Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin, a former Cannock miner, said: "I know how important well-maintained roads are to people across the West Midlands. The Government is giving councils in the West Midlands £5.7 million specifically to tackle the blight of potholes in their area."

"This is just one part of our unprecedented investment in local road maintenance over the next five years. We are giving a record £512m to local authorities in West Midlands that will improve journeys across the region." The Government has promised to give councils £250m just to tackle potholes

up until 2021. In total, the Government is spending a record £6.1 billion nationwide on local highways maintenance between 2015/16 and 2020/21.

The Government says this gives councils long-term certainty for the first time to plan future work with the aim of preventing potholes and improving local roads, bridges and street lighting.

The Asphalt Industry Alliance says across the UK there needs to be £12bn spent to get roads in reasonable condition.

A total of 58,149 potholes were filled in around the region in 2015. Compensation claims related to the road network cost West Midlands councils £2.5 million last year. Nationally, more than six million drivers suffered pothole damage to their car in 2015.

20 tons of rubbish on farmland is set alight

TWENTY tons of fly-tipped rubbish including garden fences was set alight on farmland in the Black Country with firefighters at the scene for more than 24 hours.

The burning piles of waste were left strewn across the land, off Broad Lane, Bloxwich. Video footage was posted on social media by the Red Watch crew based at Bloxwich.

It showed the scale of the rubbish mound, which had been dumped.

The town's fire crew attended the scene on Friday night and had to return continuously over the weekend to dampen any hot spots - only able to leave the site at 6.30pm on Saturday. Among the waste are what appear to be garden fences, large piles of wood and bags overflowing with waste.

The rubbish is spread across several piles which stretch across the field - some of which are completely ablaze, with thick smoke being sent into the air. A second video posted by the crew from Bloxwich showed them using a Bobcat S160 Skid Steer to help ensure the flames at the site had been fully extinguished. In a tweet accompanying the video on Friday night, the crew said: "Good progress now being made with the Bobcat skid steer digger. Crews will be delayed another hour."

Prosecuted

West Midlands Fire Service Fire Control confirmed over the weekend that crews had to attend over 24 hours to dampen hot spots at the field.

Earlier this month it was revealed that almost all of the Walsall Council's covert cameras have been deployed in the Aldridge and Beacon area to combat fly-tipping. Last year, a man was caught on camera dumping rubbish at Bridle Lane. He was prosecuted and handed a bill of more than £2,500 including a fine and court costs.

Walsall Council confirmed several others have also been captured on the CCTV and they are in the process of pursuing legal action against the offenders. The council has recently moved cameras to Collingwood Drive and Bridle Lane in Streetly, while covert CCTV has been deployed elsewhere



Getting into character is Amy Tregellis, aged 17, who plays Mary Lennox in the Secret Garden at Aldridge Youth Theatre

It's no Secret for great theatre

THE classic story of The Secret Garden will be brought to life by youngsters in an amateur dramatics performance at a purpose-built theatre next week.

Aldridge Youth Theatre, based on Noddy Park Road, will take to the stage at their base on April 21-23 from 7.30pm in the production, which involves a number of youngsters aged 15 to 18 years old.

The performance, based on the Frances Hodgson Burnett novel of the same name, is led by renowned director Neville Ellis.

Linda Symonds from the company said: "We started our first season in 1949-1950. The company started off as the Brownhills travelling theatre, which was the brainchild of a lady called Sylvia Cartwright. She always wanted the company to have its own theatre and we were lucky enough to obtain some funding to get in built back in 1977, when it was opened by Bernard Hepton."

For details visit www.alldridgeyouththeatre.co.uk/ or call 01922 458615.

Tickets are priced £7 for adults and £6 for concessions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jail on hold for shoddy builder

A BUILDER from Great Barr who took cash in advance for poor quality and unfinished work was handed a suspended jail term.

Christopher Abbotts, aged 56, of Howard Road, received a 32-week sentence suspended for two years at Birmingham Crown Court on Monday.

Abbotts, who pleaded guilty to six offences under the Fraud Act 2006 at an earlier hearing, was also ordered to complete 180 hours' community service, pay £1,500 in court costs and £500 in compensation.

Abbotts admitted making dishonest representations and not completing building work as agreed at properties in three homes in late 2012.

Pensioners group brew up for day

WALSALL Pensioners' Convention will hold a coffee morning next week.

The meeting starts at 10.30am and is expected to finish at around 1pm.

Entry is free, but there will be cakes and coffee to purchase. There will also be a tombola and a raffle.

The coffee morning takes place at the TMO Office, Burrows Street. Any money raised will be used to help pay for the group's trip to Blackpool for the Pensioners' Parliament.

For more information, contact Andrea Stanton on 01922 448331 or via email on andrea.stanton@gmail.com

Police all set to step up patrols

POLICE in Walsall are to step up patrols in Aldridge and Walsall Wood after youths began congregating and acting anti-socially.

The local neighbourhood policing team are concerned after receiving several calls about youths congregating at the alleyway leading from Marklew Close into Frieze Lane.

Sgt Joanne Winters said: "The team will conduct routine patrols at key times and engage with any youths loitering, any details obtained will be passed to our partner agencies and warning letters will be sent out."

Peak of walking ambitions for group

WALSALL Group of Ramblers will be travelling to Grindon, in the Peak District, for an eight mile circular walk. The group will travel on April 21 as part of their new summer programme of midweek walks.

Non-members are welcome and can get more information from the walk leader on 01543 321770. For more information about the Walsall Group of Ramblers, visit walsallramblers.co.uk

Catwalk call is made

WANNABE models are being invited to volunteer for an upcoming fashion show. Students at Walsall College are holding their own event, and need help from members of the public. Those interested should email fashion@walsallcollege.ac.uk

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



FROM this week, dogs must be identity-chipped by law. But one expert Richard Allport, a senior vet and owner of the Natural Medicine Centre, says implanting the chip could prove fatal in small dogs or puppies. I'm pretty sure that's what killed our stick insect.

THEY say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but theft comes a pretty close second. I have shamelessly nicked the following from a reader's email because I can't improve upon it: "MPs fiddle expenses, rich avoid tax, unemployed fiddle benefits, traders fiddle VAT and tax, government fiddles statistics. It's what the Prime Minister refers to as all being in it together."

I WAS impressed, too, with an economical little note on my recent item about Enid Blyton's Famous Five. A reader writes: "Richmal could write Enid off the page." Can't argue with that. Richmal Crompton, creator of Just William, was for my money one of the best children's authors of all time. Better than Blyton. Better than Rowling.

THE Joy of 9 to 5 (Radio 4) wondered what had happened to the eight-hour day in a computer age when half of workers reckon to work more than 40 hours a week. Some interviewees claimed to put in lots of hours but do very little work. From my many years as an office slug, I can report that those who claim to be working hard rarely are, and the busy ones are the ones who never look busy.



THANKS for your tips on how to de-criminalise the Tom Jones hit, Delilah. As you may recall, the song is causing concern among folk who think it encourages

violence with the line: "I felt the knife in my hand and she laughed no more." We need a non-lethal object in the hand. A reader points out that the singer John Otway has already recorded a version with "I felt the spoon in my hand." Other readers have suggested that stopping Delilah laughing could be achieved with a pair of socks, the TV remote control or an Aston Villa season ticket. Good to see you're all taking it so seriously.

THE Royal Society of Public Health says obesity could be cut if food labels told us how far we need to walk to burn off the calories. It's a nice idea. But like so many nice ideas it is based on the middle-class assumption that the masses are woefully ignorant and if only they could be educated they would become lean, fit and healthy. Yet there can't be a single adult who does not already know which foods are healthy and which are not. And still millions choose to pig out on fat, sugar and salt.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Fairway for start of new academy

A NEW golf academy will be teeing off in Walsall soon after its plans were given the green light by council bosses.

The first artist impression of Calderfields Golf Club's new training centre in Walsall has been released, after the club had its ambitious plans approved by Walsall planners.

The new training academy – which will create 15 jobs – will be complete

with a practice area. Bosses hope the new facility will widen the audience to encourage more women and people with disabilities to take up the sport.

There will also be an amenity building which will include toilets, an office, a shop and a golf simulator room. It is proposed the opening times will be 7am to 10pm in the summer and 8am to 10pm in the winter, and during hours of darkness,

the building will be used for seminars and evening learning.

Along with the training centre, the club, based at Aldridge Road, is also looking to add a nine-hole golf course to go alongside its existing 18-holes.

Bosses at the club said they lodged the plans to "widen the reach of existing clientele and target a different audience", namely females, younger golfers and people with disabilities.



An artist's impression of the academy

Marvellous memories at town heritage day

Report by Jordan Harris

RESIDENTS of Willenhall came together in a celebration of everything which makes the town great.

The Willenhall Heritage Day 2016 saw local historians share their photographs and memorabilia of the towns history in an effort to educate the public on the history of their area.

Pictures of Willenhall Town FC's trip to Wembley in 1981 were shared alongside exhibitions detailing the lock making history which the town continues to pride itself on and local artists work detailing the changes the area has gone through over the years.

Local market traders also set up stalls to keep the crowds, which totalled around 300, satisfied throughout the day.

Held at the Willenhall Chart Centre on Gomer Street, members of the public paid just £2 for a history lesson that will last a lifetime.

Weather

Organisers from the Willenhall Heritage Trust declared the day a 'huge success' and said they were looking forward to more of the same next year. Trust secretary Julia Saint said: "Apart from a bit of bad weather at the start of the day everything went perfectly."

"The sun even came out after an early scare. Importantly there was a lot of people coming through the door, all showing a lot of interests in our exhibitors and local societies."

"I have been told a few society have gained a few more members thanks to the day so it really worked wonders. We put this together to keep people informed of what is going on in the town currently, as well as their history and heritage. This years event was a huge success, topped off by the fact we got more people to sign up to sponsor a brick for our lock makers memorial."

Willenhall councillor Diane Coughlan, who is also a member of the Willenhall Heritage Trust, said: "It was a brilliant day."

"We had around 300 people come through the door."



Bob Rushton holds a pic of the Yale works from 1962



Heritage Trust secretary Julia Saint with Don Higham



Artist John Williams from Willenhall with his paintings



Derek Harback from Stourbridge with his traction engine



Locksmith Ralph Jackson from Willenhall

Healthwatch scrapping move called into question

A DECISION to scrap Healthwatch Walsall has been called in for scrutiny by five borough councillors.

Bosses at Walsall Council will scrap the service, which scrutinises services in the town and relays patient concerns to NHS bosses, according to a decision made last month.

A bid to renew the service's contract with Walsall Council failed in the wake of problems over high staff turnover and internal fractious relationships.

Stafford-based Engaging Communities Staffordshire are poised to deliver the service in future, however the decision to hand over a contract to the firm has been called in.

Councillors Sean Coughlan, Ian Robertson, Rose Burley, Eileen Russell and Khizar Hussain have asked for the decision to be looked at more closely.

Outsiders

Councillor Coughlan, who represents Willenhall, said: "We all had some concerns over this from the start. We are concerned that such a serious task is going to be handed over to outsiders when we believe that this issue is so important to the people of Walsall."

"It should be done by a Walsall based group."

A report which went before the council's Social Care and Health Overview Scrutiny and Performance Panel in December outlined the difficulties the group has had.

It said Healthwatch Walsall had encountered a number of issues over the contract period including high turnover of staff, changes in senior management and challenges relating to the relationships between assembly members and the board.

Have your say on public transport

PUBLIC transport users in Walsall have been asked to have their say about the area's bus network.

A consultation event organised by public transport operator Centro will be held at Wilkinson's in Park Street, Walsall Town Centre on Saturday.

People will be able to talk directly with representatives from Network West Midlands, local councillors and staff from bus operators during the event. Feedback from members of the public will be looked at by transport bosses and used to make improvements to the local bus and rail network.

Councillor John McNicholas, the chairman of the Centro's Transport Delivery Committee, said: "This event is the ideal opportunity to really understand the needs of passengers."

"By holding these events more regularly and in locations like Park Street we hope to hear from as many people as possible. We are particularly interested in hearing how we can improve connections between different forms of public transport."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Firm in £5,000 cause donation

AN Aldridge company made a donation of more than £5,000 to St Giles hospice after a year of fundraising events.

Staff at cable management company HellermannTyton set a 12 month target to raise money for the hospice and managed to get a total of £5,323 together.

Supervisor Emma Maddox said: "We felt passionate about helping St Giles as they're a local charity and we wanted to show our support for the community, and it's a charity that's very close to some of our hearts."

Winning ale no stick in the mud

A MICRO brewery in Walsall is celebrating after one of its beers won an award..

Staff at AJ's Ales on Long Acre Street are popping the corks after being given the 'Champion Beer Of The Walsall Beer Festival 2016' for their Stuck in the Mud brew.

The owners said the award being based in Walsall made it all the more of an honour, because they are proud of their local heritage. An open day was held as a result at the town centre premises on Saturday for members of the community to test out the ale.

Off-road bikes pledge by force

POLICE are attempting to track down people using off-road motorbikes on grassland in Bloxwich.

After receiving a number of complaints about the vehicles on land between Vernon Way and Glastonbury Crescent, officers from the Bloxwich West Neighbourhood force are looking to locate and destroy the bikes.

Sgt Michael Sansbury said: "We are obtaining as much information as possible about who is using those bikes and where they live."

Tennis league games are being served up

A NEW tennis league open to players of all standards will be served up – Lichfield and Burntwood Tennis League, open to men and women aged over 18.

Players will arrange their own matches, playing five to seven games during a round, which lasts eight weeks.

Entry costs £15 per round. The league officially launches on April 21. For further information visit localtennisleagues.com/lichfield

Summer camps invite

BUDDING explorers and outdoor adventurers are invited to join in a series of summer camps in Wolverhampton in the coming months.

The Super Camps RAW Adventure sessions are run by Tottenhall College and take place from August 15 to 19 on Wood Road, Wolverhampton. For

Care home bosses told they need to improve

A GREAT Wyrley nursing home has been told it needs to improve amid concerns over safety.

Hornegarth House care home on Walsall Road has been rated as 'requires improvement' by CQC inspectors, who criticised staffing levels, storage of medicine and limited opportunities for the patients.

The rating referred to its safety, responsiveness and level of caring, but it was 'good' for its effectiveness and leadership. In their conclusion inspectors commented: "There were not enough staff available to ensure people were safe, we observed that people had to wait to be provided with support. Medicines were not stored in a safe way and therefore we could not be sure they were safe to administer."

But the report continued: "Quality monitoring systems were in place. The provider sought the opinions of people who used the service and relatives to bring about changes. There was a new manager in post. There were a complaints procedure in place and when complaints were made the provider dealt with these in line with their policy."

The inspection was carried on February 17. The report praised the home's effectiveness and leadership. It added: "Quality checks were in place to bring about improvements to the service." A spokesman from Four Seasons, which runs the home said: "Since the inspection in February the home manager has been implementing an improvement plan."

Message issued over hospices

PARENTS may be missing out on support that could help their child battle illness, the concerned boss of a Walsall hospice has said.

A recent study carried out across the West Midlands revealed that 79 per cent of people who were asked about hospices believed that they only offered end of life care.

David Strudley, chief executive of Acorns, said: "Our key concern from the survey findings is the public don't fully understand exactly who children's hospices care for. The potential knock-on effect is that children and families in genuine need don't realise hospices can help them. We often encounter a perception that children's hospices are focused solely on end of life and while this is a very important part of our work, we undertake a lot of work with children and families often well before this stage."

Street collection nets cause £100

MEMBERS of the public are being thanked for donating to a street collection held in Wolverhampton on Friday, March 18 and helping to raise a total of £100.17 for the World Animal Protection charity.

Firm takes off with £330m airship deal



The Lockheed Martin airship

A COMPANY based on Wolverhampton Business Airport has signed a £330 million deal to become the first to operate a new generation of airships. Straightline Aviation (SLA) has become the first customer to order a dozen hybrid airships from US aviation giant Lockheed Martin.

SLA, based at offices on the airport, at Bobbington, revealed in March its plans to start operating a fleet of airships by 2018.

It has now signed a letter of intent to buy 12 airships and is working with Hybrid Enterprises, Lockheed Mar-

tin's hybrid airship reseller, to finalise the purchase agreement.

The deal was revealed by Lockheed Martin, which has been developing the airships at its top secret Skunk Works in California.

Mike Kendrick, co-founder and chief executive of SLA, said: "We are delighted to be first in line with this magnificent aircraft that is going to dramatically change the way cargo is moved around the world."

Rob Binns, chief executive of Hybrid Enterprises, added: "Lockheed Martin's Hybrid Airship represents

a revolution in remote cargo delivery.

"Having an experienced team such as SLA recognise the Hybrid Airship's potential by signing the letter of intent solidifies the demand for this new mode of transportation. We are honoured and excited to share this milestone with them."

The helium-filled airships will be able to carry up to 20 tons of cargo or passengers using an air cushion landing system and burning less fuel than conventional aircraft. Initially it aims to supply the airships to work with gas, oil and mining companies.

Planning takes too long says developer

A ROGUE developer dubbed as the 'HMO Daddy' who controversially turned two former business premises into housing said he flouted planning laws because the process was 'too time-consuming'.

Buildings at 51 to 53 Wolverhampton Street in Willenhall and 16 Butts Road in St Matthew's have 22 single bedrooms between them and have been used for houses of multiple occupation – HMOs – for more than a year.

But tenants living there will now be forced out of their homes within two months after Walsall Council chiefs issued enforcement action for the properties to be returned to their original state.

The authority's planning committee signed off on enforcement on Thursday slamming owner Jim Haliburton, of Darlaston-based J9 Accommodation, for 'completely ignoring housing legislation' as well as failing to conduct fire risk assessments. Mr Haliburton, owner of J9, which boasts more than 900 rooms, remained defiant whilst speaking at the committee.

Valuable

When questioned why he had not applied for planning permission, he replied the process was 'too time-consuming'.

He said: "The only thing I'm guilty of is turning empty derelict buildings and turning them into low-cost valuable housing for working residents, which can only be good for the area."

"Applying for planning permission is a long process and very time-consuming but the quality of accommodation I provide is of the highest standard, going over and above fire safety procedures."

Complaints were originally made about the two buildings in April last year. Since then applications have been made to formally 'change the use' but both have been rejected by the council. The buildings will now be returned to their previous state and all fixtures and fittings associated with housing ripped out.

Councillors Ian Shires and Sean Coughlan blasted Mr Haliburton for not going through the correct planning procedures.

Councillor Coughlan said: "This has been going on for longer than it should. We wouldn't have known about this issue if people hadn't contacted us. It's not acceptable to simply not comply and ignore housing legislation."



Taking a look at the swan pedalos, Jessie Desai, of Walsall, at the arboretum

Pedalos in beak condition for park

YOU know spring must have arrived when the swan boats appear at Walsall Arboretum. The pedalos, shaped as swans, are back out in force at the arboretum's lake to signal the upturn in weather.

This is just the second year that the boats have been back in use after a two-decade-plus lay-off.

The boats were brought back to a huge fanfare last year and look here to stay as they were set afloat by popular demand again this year.

Mark Holden, the head of clean and green services at Walsall Council, said the boats would give visitors to the Arboretum a 'bird's eye view' of wildlife on the lake.

He said: "The return of the pedalo service offers visitors to the borough's much-loved arboretum a chance to get a bird's eye view of the surrounding wildlife on Hatherton Lake."

The boats returned to Hatherton Lake last year just as the boathouse at the Arboretum was restored as part of a £7.9 million revamp. Part of the lake has been cordoned off to prevent the boats causing any disturbance to nesting birds.

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It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services.

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money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done.

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Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated."

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Scotsman still just the ticket for rail fans

WHEN tickets went on sale to travel on a train pulled by the newly-restored Flying Scotsman at the Severn Valley Railway, the website crashed within minutes. Hours later, the website continued to have problems, as people clamoured for the 7,000 tickets released.

It's not really surprising. Flying Scotsman was a milestone in engineering, the first railway engine officially recorded as travelling at 100mph.

And all this was in 1934, when company transport for many people was still a horse and cart. But these were the days when innovation meant exciting new developments where the aim was to make everything faster, bigger, more powerful.

Do you think, 80 years from now, people will feel the same sense of nostalgia and affection for the iPhone or contactless payment? We've lost our imagination.

Oh, and one other thing. The experience at the Severn Valley Railway shows us that the old technology is considerably more dependable than the new stuff.

□ □ □

DO you remember James Billington, the comedian who caused a minor diplomatic spat by pretending to be the Mayor of Stafford?

Well he's resurfaced again, and this time the joke is asking people to give him £1,000 to meet his bogus Russian bride.

Look, I know I'm a traditionalist, but didn't you prefer the days when comedians just told jokes?

□ □ □

MAYBE I should be angrier, but I really can't get very excited about the prime minister's historic offshore holdings.

He once had £30,000 worth of shares in his father's company, which he sold six years ago, and paid the same amount of tax as he would have done anyway.

If that's all there is to it, I think we're barking up the wrong tree.

Then again, perhaps it's because I participate in tax avoidance too. Like many of you, I have got some ISAs, which I do for the express reason of paying less tax.

And why not? We pay income tax and national insurance when we earn money, we pay VAT when we spend it, not to mention the plethora of so-called green taxes we have force on us.

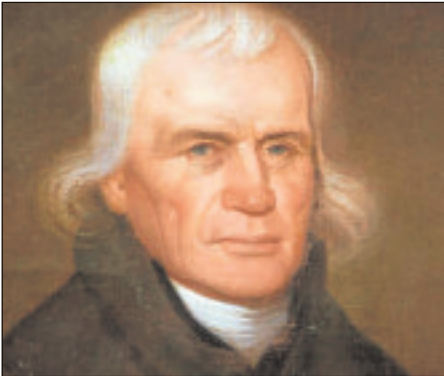
Is it really fair that if we put something away for a rainy day, so we will hopefully become less dependent on the state in years to come, that we should be clobbered for that as well?

Particularly given that last week the Government revealed it would be spending £9 million on propaganda about the EU referendum, carefully timed to fall outside of the "purdah" period, when such use of funds would be outlawed.

Now that is what we should be bashing Cameron for.



A statue of the bishop, seen on horseback in New Jersey



A portrait of the great man, from the Black Country



The bishop's former home in West Bromwich, seen in 1973

Preacher Asbury, who helped build a nation

RICHARD GUTTRIDGE celebrates the life of a man who laid the foundations of Christianity in the US, 200 years on from his death

A LITTLE over two miles north of the White House in Washington DC stands a statue of Francis Asbury, a man revered all across America.

The statue honour which is one shared by American heroes Abraham Lincoln and Franklin D Roosevelt and shows the regard in which he is held in the States.

There are towns and hospitals dotted across the country named after him, but in the place he was born, here in the Black Country, much less is known about the man who a president declared was one of the most important in the history of America.

Last week marked the 200th anniversary since Asbury's death. His life was one devoted to spreading the word of God and he is widely regarded of being the founder of the Methodist Church in the US. Many experts even say that Christianity as a whole in America can be traced back to the Black Country man.

His incredible tale sounds like something from a movie. He travelled an astonishing 225,000 miles on horseback over 45 years preaching to anyone who would listen in the burgeoning New World.

But before he landed on the east coast of soon-to-be-independent America, Asbury's story started in Great Barr.

He was born into a working-class family in 1745 and lived in Newton Road, Hamstead. It was all a very long way from a presidential address and a statue close to the White House. His childhood home is today a small museum – a warm tribute but also an isolated one.

He became involved with the Methodist movement from a young age, leading teachings at the West Bromwich Wesleyan Society as a teenager, splitting his time between preaching and his job as a metal worker.

Over the next few years he began his jour-



Ian Casey, museum assistant at the bishop's former home in Great Barr, now a museum



Collections officer, David Waring

ney. Initially it was confined to the boundaries of the Black Country, leading sermons in Wolverhampton, Wednesbury and Walsall, but at the age of 22 he bowed to a higher calling.

In 1771 he volunteered to travel to America. It was the last time he would see the Black Country. Within a couple of weeks he was visiting New York and Philadelphia.

It is not known quite what his new audience made of his Black Country accent but it clearly didn't put them off. When the American War of Independence broke out in 1776, he was one of only two Methodist ministers in the whole country. During the next 30 years he toured America's east and midwest on horseback, preaching to anyone who would listen in courthouses, pubs, tobacco houses, fields, and public squares.

In 1814, Asbury's health began to decline. He died on March 31, 1816, seven days after delivering his last sermon in Virginia.

While events were held in the Black Country marking the anniversary, including at his former home-turned-museum, more attention was devoted to the occasion in the States.

A group of Americans came over to Dudley recently to attend an event honouring Asbury at the Black Country Living Museum.

Al DeFillipo, who is based in Florida and has written books on the life of the nomadic preacher does not underestimate the importance of Asbury to Christians on the other side of the Atlantic, describing him as the 'George Washington of American Christianity'.

He said: "What also made Francis Asbury an American favourite was the fact he was known by almost everyone in the burgeoning nation. He travelled from Maine in the east to Georgia in the south east, from Maryland and Virginia in the east to Tennessee and Kentucky in the west made him a household name.

"Not only did he preach and teach in these towns but he also spent the night in many of the homes of the faithful in these towns. He never owned a home during his 45-year ministry in America.

"There are some who correctly state that if there wasn't a Francis Asbury there would be no American Methodism. But there are also many who acknowledge that without Francis Asbury, there would be no American Christianity. Many of the enriching qualities of contemporary American Christianity originated with the efforts of Francis Asbury and the thousands of travelling preachers he pushed to spread the life-giving message of the gospel."

More than a century after his death, President Calvin Coolidge got up to speak at a dedication ceremony to unveil his statue and declared proudly: "He is entitled to rank as one the builders of our nation."

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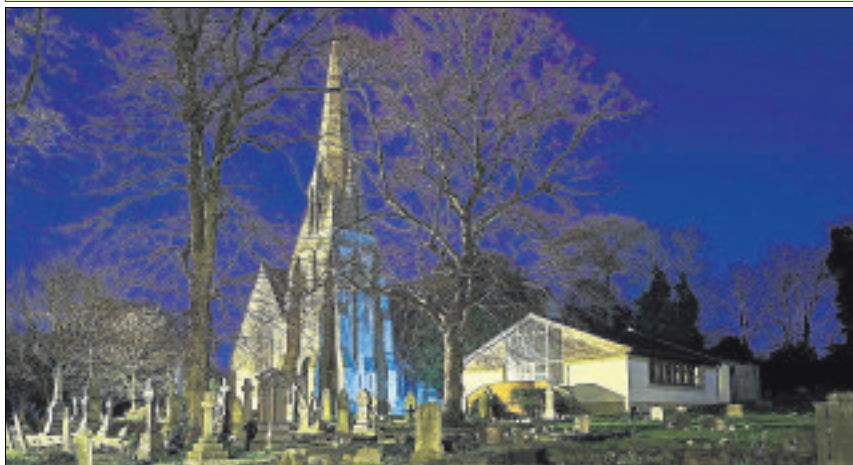
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Gary's spooky view of church in village



St Michael the Archangel's Church in Rushall, photographed by Gary Crutchley - www.crutchleyhistory.co.uk

THIS spectacular image captures the spooky side of the St Michael the Archangel Church in Rushall.

It was taken by Black Country amateur photographer Gary Crutchley, a local historian, scientist and genealogist with an interest in historic buildings. The bright lights against the building help brighten the tall spire and eerily show the cemetery in it's night-time glory.

Gary, of Bloxwich, said: "I've done a number of pictures at the church. I like it because it's quite a gothic looking church. And I like the graveyard at the front, it gives it something extra."

The present Parish church of Rushall is the third church in the history of the town. The first church was built by the Lords of the manor of Rushall close to Rushall Hall.

Vandalism is ruled out

VANDALISM at Walsall Cenotaph has now been ruled out by a councillor who offered a reward for information.

Walsall Council confirmed earlier this week it was looking into vandalism at the Bradford Place memorial, which pays tribute to those who lost their lives in the First World War, after stones had come loose.

Councillor Doug James offered a reward to anyone who may have information on the vandalism and received a reply from someone claiming to be there at the time, who said the stones came loose accidentally.

An email sent to councillor James by Robert Phillips said: "I was there when it happened and it was purely accidental."

"A friend of mine was standing on the wall having his picture taken and the concrete slab wasn't cemented

down properly and the whole block tipped and smashed on the floor narrowly missing his feet. He was lucky to not seriously injure himself."

Council bosses said that money to repair the cenotaph, which takes pride of place in the town centre, would be worked into its annual schedule.

Councillor James said: "I am happy that Robert has come forward with what looks like a sincere email."

"He is understandably concerned about the public's reaction to this."

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Mrs Fieldhouse from Walsall says:

"A fast efficient service, very pleased with new stairlift".

Mr & Mrs Myatt from Brownhills says:

"Very impressed with the speedy Installation of the Stairlift. Very efficient, Thanks".

Darwinism missing the explanation for origins

IN spite of the title of his book *Origin of Species*, the one thing Darwin never dealt with was the origin of species and natural selection certainly cannot explain the origin of traits.

So, whether it's 'molecules to men' or 'from goo to you by way of the zoo' or the 'tree of life' for which evidence only exists for the twigs on the ends of the branches – it all compares to a frog turning into a prince.

In the 'big bang' where did the raw material come from to produce a colossal explosion that scattered 'non-living matter' through-out expanding space?

Was it already there? For decades, those arguing for evolution used 'junk DNA' as a major source of evidence.

They said that the majority of genetic material in our cells was the useless remains of millions of years of evolutionary mutations and mistakes.

Now the Encode Project recently found that the vast majority, that is, 80 per cent of our genetic code, is there for a reason.

With more research that figure is expected to rise further.

The bedrock of the Christian Church is creation.

In the beginning, God created the heavens, the Earth, the universe and everything in it – out of nothing.

DON WESTWOOD
Pelsall

How has the situation of youngsters missing out on school come about?

INCOMPETENCE and yet more incompetence...

The report of 300-plus children in Walsall, not attending school.

Surely this cannot be a sudden occurrence, but has been happening over a long period of time. In my own time, when missing time from school, the family could expect the school inspectors to be knocking on the door, wanting to know why your child was not in school.

Even for a day off, parents were expected to send a note, for the headmaster, offering an explanation – does this happen today?

Has this disgraceful behaviour been reported? Or have our schools

been discreetly covering up the attendance figures?

Have our teachers ignored the situation not really wanting ne'er do wells, having fallen so far behind in learning, in their classes – already having to cope with their share of disruptive children.

Were our elected councillors aware of what was happening, or just happy to turn a blind eye?

Not wanting to know, unable to deal with the situation, with so many other problems – poor school league results, presently Walsall in the 140s out of 150 local authorities in England.

The state of roads, so full of pot-

holes, or the problems in housing, having decided to abdicate from their responsibilities since WHG was formed out of a failed council housing department. Poor social services... the list goes on.

Do our councillors realise these children now missing out on education and those from the past are fodder for the constant ranks of the unemployed, living on benefits being provided by those that are employable, and their hard work.

The council elections are due at the end of May.

Are you, the electorate, going to continue electing those the political party selectors have chose, nice

people, yes, wanting to serve the community, yes, but lacking the experience, lacking the know-how of man-management, with no competence for the tasks.

They are only interested in their party winning an election.

If we continue to vote for these, with proven failure records, then we have no right to moan and groan about the continuing run-down, money-wasting high unemployment and any of the other problems which have beset Walsall.

We need to know who and what we are voting for.

RAY HAMMOND
Aldridge

Millions in Scottish MPs reserve for authority should not have a say

SO, Walsall council is putting its council tax up by 10 per cent and closing libraries, CAB, to name just a few.

Perhaps the people of Walsall, who actually pay council tax to subsidise others who pay nothing, would be interested to know that Walsall Council has £423 million pounds in reserve.

This was disclosed on Andrew Neill's politics show a few weeks ago. Walsall Council should be ashamed of itself. They should also be ashamed of the disgraceful town they preside over.

Unfortunately, I needed to go into Walsall a few weeks ago and was told by one shop assistant to put my purse in my bag as, and I quote: "This place is horrible," a sentiment I endorse.

The council must be losing hundreds of pounds in revenue from people who will no longer set foot in the place.

C A HARRIS
Willenhall

IN reply to K Parton's letter, regarding the Scottish MP's votes against Sunday longer opening hours in England and Wales. I agree completely with his sentiments about the Scottish vote being allowed in matters that do not directly affect Scotland.

But I was more incensed when the Scottish Parliament voted against student tuition fees in Scotland, then turned up at Westminster and voted for fees to be paid by English and Welsh students.

I could not comprehend why they did that, and came to the conclusion it was purely vindictive.

Without the Scottish MP's vote the tuition fees 'against vote' would have carried.

It has been said that if Great Britain votes to leave the EU, Scotland would leave Great Britain. As far as I'm concerned that's a win win.

MR B K WILLIAMS
Tipton

Countryside brings home the difference

MANY thanks to Councillor Richard Worrall and John B for a great day out to Welshpool on Sunday March 20.

Even the sun came out for us. The landscape was beautiful and the flora and fauna, with a lovely splash of colour from the daffs and cowslips along the hedgerow and track.

Back home with Tarmac being thrown down when once there was verge. A manmade lake when it rains. The natural soak-away has been destroyed.

Even our historic drovers, horse and cart, three ton bridge is in trouble, and a carbuncle on the landscape. You have a lot to answer for Walsall Council.

T HILL
Rushall
Walsall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

grame.andrew@
expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Parking is the issue with temple extension

I'VE just read a piece in your paper about Walsall council approving the extension to the Guru Nanak Sikh temple in Caldmore. Councillor Whyte states that the residents would not mind the extension and would not complain about it – however, it's not really the extension it's the traffic and parking! The temple can't cope with the people who visit now let alone an increase of 60 per cent. Sandwell Street and the surrounding streets become an extension of the car park and residents can't park their own cars outside their own houses or even in their own street! Perhaps JMP and Cllr Whyte would care to come and have a look on a Sunday if they can find somewhere to park!

P JOHNSON
Walsall

Open mind needed on links to growth

M Verrall's letter on March 30 disparagingly suggests that anyone who rejects 'evolution' in this day and age should be punished!

However, he did not make it clear which form of evolution he was referring to, presumably he meant neo-Darwinian-evolution, as most folk do.

The process of neo-Darwinian evolution relies on random, chance mutations in our genes giving a benefit to our survival and then natural-selection fixing this change in our species.

This is a process that has now for the last decade or so been under increasing pressure from within science and is on its way out. Why? Because of its inability to account for the life we see today.

Now, an evolutionary process that has purpose, meaning and design at its very heart is a very different prospect altogether and in its essence has to be non-Darwinian.

The life that we observe, is always, without exception, based on information, language and code, such as the 3.6 billion letter-code found in the DNA molecule in every cell of our bodies, which can only be provided by a design-input.

In this form of evolution we can see that we are truly meant to be here, we are no accident of time and space.

We should not be hoodwinked by atheistic dogma, whose main crutch is of course this neo-Darwinism!

R C ELLIS
Walsall

Madness of the millions given to Turkey in deal

PM Cameron prattles on about how he will protect us from jihadist attacks. Cameron has given £500 million to Turkey, under the Turkey-EU deal, with the other 27 EU members only contributing £1.7bn.

Plus, he has ordered two UK border force fleet ships to go to the Aegean Sea, off Turkey, to assist illegal immigrants to land in Europe. This action has left the UK open to more illegal immigrants to enter the UK.

While we see big problems at home, he continues to waste billions in foreign aid etc, completely ignoring our needs and forcing yet more austere measures on us.

When will this madness end?

R SAUNDERS
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Walk was first step in a lifetime of romance

WHEN Jean Pitt first agreed to go out with her husband-to-be William, she didn't know his name or anything else about him.

Now the couple, who live in Short Heath, have been together for 60 happy years of marriage, celebrating their diamond anniversary this month.

They first met as Jean was walking home. William, now 85, was nearing the end of his national service in Scotland, and was visiting his family on monthly leave.

Jean, 83, said: "We started talking and he asked me if he could walk me home. When we got there, he asked me if we could meet again."

"I remember saying to the girls at work that I hoped he had his uniform on again, else I wouldn't have recognised him."

Gardener

The couple were married five years later, on March 24 1956 at the Holy Trinity church in Short Heath.

"We've taken life as good as we could," Jean said. "We've had a very happy life together."

William who is a keen gardener and won awards for football until he was 50, worked as a builder for a time, before moving to Willenhall Motor Radiator until he retired due to illness.

Jean left her job at the Shaw Street Foundry when she became a mother to Lloyd, now 58. Later the couple had a daughter, Maxine, now 44. She returned to work at the Royal British Legion in Short Heath when the children had grown up.

The couple's children and grandchildren organised a surprise party at the British Legion. They invited family and friends, including two of Jean's five bridesmaids, to the party.



William and Jean Pitt from Short Heath



The happy couple on their wedding day

Care home among the best

A CARE home has been named among the top recommended in the West Midlands. Mali Jenkins Bupa Care Home in Walsall has been chosen from 1,771 homes in the region to be one the top 20 receiving an award.

The awards, which have been given from carehome.co.uk, a leading online directory and industry website for researching and sourcing care homes, is based on the recommendations from their residents, as well as friends and relatives of residents.

Rebecca Herbert, home manager, said: "We are delighted to receive this recognition for Mali Jenkins, particularly as it's based on recommendations by the people who matter – our residents, their families and friends."

Davina Ludlow, director of carehome.co.uk, said: "We feel the best people to rate a care home are the residents and their families and friends." A full list of winners in the West Midlands is available at www.care-home.co.uk/awards.

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A wide-ranging extra-curricular programme – The variety of trips and visits and other activities is extensive and enables our students to develop a wide range of transferable skills which will equip them for their lifelong pursuit of learning and success.

A high quality and committed staff – Our staff are highly talented and have the ability to ensure that our students both enjoy their learning and achieve well.

We employ a blend of experience



Head teacher Dr Alison Bruton with Teni Areje, who was a sports day champion

and innovation which makes sure that the learning experiences are not only creative but also effective in preparing students for their futures.

A family orientated environment – Queen Mary's High School is a unique and very special learning environment which should not be taken for granted.

Visitors and newcomers to the

school comment on its friendly, family atmosphere.

Students achieve well here because they have formed great relationships with their teachers, other adults, friends and fellow students.

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Supplier fined £5k for faulty bungee cords

A COMPANY which sold faulty and potentially fatal bungee cords to a Black Country shop has been fined more than £5,000.

Woolbro Distribution Limited sold the 'Rapide' brand three-piece bungee cords, which could be used as luggage straps, to Pound City, Stafford Street, Walsall.

Officers from Walsall Council's trading standards division carried out an inspection at the shop after being made aware that similar products had in the past caused serious eye injuries, in some cases resulting in the loss of an eye and in one case a fatality.

Officers purchased two sets for testing on January 14, 2015 and advised staff at the shop to remove the remaining two sets for sale as tests were carried out.

The cords were supplied to Bradford-based Woolbro by a company in China and 48 packs were sold to Pound City on October 27, 2014, prior to a product recall on February 9, 2015.

Recoil

Testing revealed that the cords fell short of the British standard where they should sustain a force of 400 Newtons without failing.

Officers feared that putting too much pressure on the cords would cause them to recoil at high speed and potentially cause an injury.

Woolbro were given a £5,000 fine at Walsall Magistrates court and ordered to pay officers costs of £816.

Kerry Munro, prosecuting, said: "A product which failed the 400 Newtons force test would not be deemed a safe product." The British Standards for these products also required them to have various warnings and instructions for their safe use.



An example of the packet of three bungee cords which have been recalled



Following their testing at 400 newtons pressure – all three failed

"Whilst the production did contain some warnings and instructions, they were not in accordance with the standard. Under testing, a force of 400 Newtons was applied to each cord, in order to pass the test, the force must be sustained for one minute.

"All three failed the test. Speaking in interview, Mr Ian McDonald, a director of Woolbro confirmed that all

their stock had been sold and he had instigated a product recall on the item.

"He said that the company had a quality control system but this product had slipped through the system.

"Mr McDonald said that the company had reviewed their procedures to prevent this happening again and he now employed two quality control people."



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Thomas Orton who is celebrating his 100th birthday in Aldridge



Dering Lines, in the Brecon Beacons, 1940, Thomas is back row second from right



PoW Thomas seen in 1943



Thomas seen with a letter and a wartime picture



Thomas on the ski slopes as a free man in Switzerland

My amazing life after escape from PoW camp to reach 100th milestone

"I CAME so close to death that I still can't quite get my head around how I am here today."

These are the words from former prisoner of war Thomas Orton, who believes he has a lot to be thankful for after celebrating his 100th birthday.

From growing up in the Welsh Valleys and managing to find work outside of the coal mines, to making his escape from a PoW camp and eventually raising a family with his wife of 54 years Maud, he says his time has taught him what is truly important.

Mr Orton, who grew up in Llandbrach, Caerphilly, with his father Frederick and mother Kate, started working down the mines straight from school, aged 14.

When he was offered work as a general labourer at a nearby farm he jumped at the chance. He said: "I just couldn't get to grips with life in the pits, I hated it. I would cry every morning before I went to work."

"Life on the farm was much better."

As he settled into life as a farmboy, the

MEMORY LANE

Report by Jordan Harris

Second World War was breaking out, taking with it friends he had grown up with.

Mr Orton, who now lives in Aldridge, joined the South Wales Borderers. He said: "We started out training every day in the Brecon Beacons, which was wonderful. I have never been as fit in my entire life as I was then."

Soon, his role took him to the Middle East. It was in Sidi Barrani, Egypt, where his life would change forever.

As German soldiers upped the ante and regularly opened fire on retreating British troops in the desert, Mr Orton and his brigade surrendered, before being taken prisoner. He said: "We were kept outdoors in this desert, surrounded by a ring of petrol tanks which were all chained together. The conditions were terrible, all I had was half a blanket I shared with another prisoner."

"When we put our hands up to surrender, I thought that my life was over."

Eventually, the prisoners were sent to another camp in Naples. He ended up in the northern province of Bergamo, where he would be made to work as a prisoner, digging canals.

Recalling the day he escaped from the camp, he said: "Looking back it was so easy to escape because Italy was in the process of surrendering. We were making our way to the canals and me and a man called Ken Scott just ran away into the mountains."

For months on end, the pair lived off what they could find. Salvation came in the form of an Italian lady called Piera Passinelli, who saw the pair out in hiding and offered to take them in at her farm home.

The pair worked there for a year, hiding in an outhouse at night or in the nearby church. Mr Orton said: "The family were so kind, from the moment I met Piera I knew she genuinely wanted to help us."

Towards the end of his time with the family, Mr Orton became friendly with some members of the Italian Partisans, who put him and Ken on a train to Switzerland.

They stayed in Switzerland until the war was over before returning home. When Mr

Orton eventually arrived back in Wales, aged 30, a letter from an old army colleague Albert Adams, offering him work in Edgbaston, prompted the next step on his journey. Fate would have it that Maud, whom he would end up marrying, lived next door to the man who had invited him to Edgbaston.

The pair met and fell in love, with Mr Orton asking for her hand in marriage after just three weeks of courting. They had their first child Christine and after taking on various temporary jobs around Birmingham, he saved up enough money to buy a truck and start his own haulage business.

Mr Orton and his son John, ran the firm Thomas Orton and Son from 1972 onwards. They later went into business together again, starting Flame Kut Profiles, in Darlaston, where Mr Orton would work until he was 88. His wife Maud died in 2000, aged 85.

Mr Orton, who has four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, said: "There was a time when I was sure that I was going to die young. Meeting my wife changed my life, she transformed me from a regular lad into someone who cared very much about family and everything that goes with it."

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All aboard for an ocean of artistry

THE latest exhibition on the 4th floor of The New Art Gallery Walsall, has been put together by young Pakistani curator, Aziz Sohail. Called The Humble Vessel and running from April 29 to July 24, it follows Aziz's residency at the gallery supported by the British Council in March 2015 and his mentoring over the previous year by head of exhibitions, Deborah Robinson.

Aziz has chosen to focus on representations of boats and the sea and how they inform artistic practices in diverse ways. The exhibition also features a newly-commissioned film work by Pakistani artist Fazal Rizvi which is shown alongside a diverse range of historic, modern and contemporary works. Artists include David Muirhead Bone, Ryan Gander, Harold Gilman, William Scott, Dayanita Singh and Bob and Roberta Smith.

Both Deborah and Aziz will be talking about the exhibition and the wider project at a free event on Saturday April 30 at 2pm.



Youngsters look on as Titan the robot appears at the Old Square Shopping Centre

Titan-ic day for shopping centre visitors with robot

A FAMOUS robot that performed with the likes of Rihanna and the Rolling Stones has come to Walsall to help promote the Old Square shopping centre.

Titan the Robot, who has previously shared the stage with an array of artists across the globe, arrived in Walsall on April 5 to perform in front of his adoring fans. He delivered half hour long performances of comedy, street theatre and music throughout the day, as part of an ongoing project to encourage people to visit the centre.

Roger Tovell, part of the marketing team for the centre, said: "Titan is the world's most famous robot. He has a bit of a slapstick comedy routine, is around eight foot tall and has a very good sense of humour. He has been part of the stage with Rihanna

and the Rolling Stones and has toured Russia and the Middle East."

The robot, who has 43,689 likes on Facebook, 6,884 followers on Twitter and performs regularly as part of major gigs, festivals and parties, is not the first entertaining individual that has come to promote Old Square.

"We've had some special hula hoopers who previously appeared on X Factor come along to the square to perform their tricks last summer and other events to encourage parents to bring along their children to the square to play.

"But Titan has such a phenomenal following by the public that he really is here by popular demand. I went with him to Bury a few months ago and one man their reeled

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Yamlet – to be or not to be, ay it the question?

ONE of William Shakespeare's most famous tragedies is being translated into the Black Country dialect.

The move comes as part of a project that aims to celebrate and preserve the distinctive language of the region. Yamlet will see the Prince of Denmark story's characters perform translated excerpts in locations around Cradley Heath.

The title character will be portrayed by an aspiring actor from Stourbridge.

Birmingham School of Acting postgraduate student Stuart Ash will be filmed on location in period Elizabethan costume and his performances will be broadcast throughout April on Facebook, Twitter and, of course, 'YowTube' and 'InstaYam'.

Mr Ash, an MA acting student at Birmingham City University, said: "It's a fantastic project for me to be working on and something that's very close to my heart."



Stuart Ash as Yamlet

Phrases

Yamlet has been devised by Philip Holyman and Gareth Nicholls, co-directors of Walsall-based theatre company Little Earthquake.

The pair are both visiting lecturers at the Birmingham School of Acting, part of Birmingham City University. The work has partly been inspired by the upcoming 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, on April 23. Mr Holyman said: "With a ruff round his neck and a fake skull in his hand, Yamlet will celebrate Black Country cultural identity by capturing fragments of language which are in danger of being lost forever."

Yamlet was commissioned as part of the 'Where's Our Spake Gone?' project, supported by £77,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Since 2014, a team of linguists, historians and artists has been working alongside residents to explore ways to record and celebrate the distinctive dialect and language of the Black Country. Their efforts have focused in particular on four areas – Cradley Heath, Gornal, Oldbury and Tipton – each of which host public events featuring performances and exhibitions. The project will generate an archive of oral history interviews, as well as photographic essays and short films, workshops, a commemorative book with accompanying DVD and several new artist commissions, including 'Yamlet'.

Pupils not fulfilling potential, say Ofsted

PUPILS at a primary school in Walsall are not always fulfilling their potential in English and maths, government inspectors have found.

Work set at Chuckyery Primary School, in Lincoln Road, is not always sufficiently demanding, preventing pupils from making faster progress. Bosses at the school have been told it requires improvement across the board.

Jeremy Bird, for Ofsted, said: "Although writing and mathematics teaching is improving, teachers do not always make their expectations clear to pupils. Teachers do not insist that pupils use their current grammar and punctuation skills accurately in their writing or calculation strategies in their mathematics. As a result, pupils make slower rates of progress." The report also found attendance rates at the school are 'too low' despite efforts to improve since the last Ofsted inspection in March 2014.

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Pop star drops in for breakfast
See Page 17



Max appeal

Lisa Maxwell – Page 17



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The comedian, a regular panellist on
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Pasha Kovalev



Sunday, Grand Theatre
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TF2 6EP.
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The Slade Rooms,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1RQ.
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Jeff Lynne's ELO
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The Robin 2 Hotel, Bilston,
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Pixie has Lott to offer in iconic role

POP princess Pixie Lott takes on the iconic role of Holly Golightly in a new touring production of Breakfast At Tiffany's.

Taking on the role made famous by the legendary Audrey Hepburn in 1961 film, the chart-topping singer will star alongside Downton Abbey actor Matt Barber, who stars as Fred. Former Bread and Goodnight Sweetheart Victor McGuire will play Joe Bell.

Making up the cast are Robert Calvert, Naomi Cranston, Charlie De Melo, Tim Frances, Andrew Joshi, Melanie La Barrie and Sevan Stephan, with Katy Allen and Andy Watkins.

Enigmatic

It reaches Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre next week, April 18 to 23, as part of a UK and Ireland tour that runs from March 3 to April 30, with Lott heading up the cast. It continues from June 13 to 25.

Emily Atack and former Corrie actress and Strictly contestant Georgia May Foote are also lined up to take on the enigmatic role at some stage during the tour.

Truman Capote's classic novella, set in New York in 1943, has been adapted for the stage by Pulitzer Prize-winning finalist and Tony and Olivier Award-winning playwright Richard Greenberg and contains memorable songs from the era as well as original music by Grant Olding.

Still only 25, Lott has had three



Pixie Lott as Holly Golightly



Pixie Lott and Matt Barber as Fred

number one albums and topped the single charts three times with Mama Do, Boys and Girls and All About Tonight. She was a successful contestant on series 10 of Strictly Come Dancing in 2014.

Director Nikolai Foster said: "It's a testament to the beauty of Capote's imagination, the extraordinary char-

acters he created and Greenberg's faithful adaptation, that alongside Pixie and Matt, we have assembled such an accomplished company of actors to bring this dazzling play to life."

Call 0844 871 3011, for groups of 10-plus call 0844 871 3031 or visit www.atgtickets.com/birmingham

Loose Woman Lisa fits The Bill as Judy

LISA Maxwell shakes off her Loose Women tag as she makes her stage acting debut as Judy Garland, hitting Wolverhampton next week.

Maxwell, a former children's TV presenter, who also represented the UK in A Song For Europe, performed alongside Russ Abbot in the early 1990s, but made her name in The Bill as DS Samantha Nixon.

She spent five years on ITV's Loose Women panel, but is now touring the UK in the West End and Broadway hit End of the Rainbow. It reaches the Grand Theatre from April 18-20 and also stars comedian Gary Wilmot and former EastEnders actor Sam Attwater.

Set in 1968, the once-glittering Judy Garland is in London to make an explosive comeback. But off stage, holed up in her hotel room, she is battling with her young new fiancé, her devoted accom-

panist, and her destructive addictions. Will she be able to conquer her demons and reclaim her crown as one of history's great musical icons?

The funny and emotionally-charged musical features some of Garland's most memorable songs including Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

Gary Wilmot will play Anthony. His own musical theatre stardom began when he played Bill Snibson in Me and My Girl at the Adelphi Theatre and has a host of theatre credits to his name.

Attwater, who plays Mickey, made his TV acting debut in 2009, playing Ricky in Hollyoaks.

Credits

The following year he joined EastEnders and its online spin-off EastEnders: E20, as Leon Small. Stage credits include Brad in the 40th anniversary tour of The Rocky Horror Show, Dreamboats and Petticoats in the West End, and the 2014 UK tour of Seven Brides for Seven Brothers. He won the sixth series of ITV's Dancing on Ice in 2011.

End of the Rainbow first premiered at the Sydney Opera House in 2005, before playing at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2006. It returned to the UK in 2010, transferring to the West End for a six-month run. It received four Olivier Award nominations. A Broadway run followed in 2012.

Showtimes are 7.30pm with a 2.30pm Wednesday matinee. Call 01902 429212 or visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk



Rockers Rabbit on at the Robin

COCKNEY rockers Chas n Dave will be giving it some Rabbit at the Robin 2 in Bilston this weekend.

The chirpy duo marked their 50th anniversary in showbusiness three years ago and play the Mount Pleasant venue on Saturday. Tickets are £22.50 in advance or £24.50 on the door.

Former Zombies frontman Colin Blunstone performs next week. Support on Wednesday, April 20, comes from Balsamo Deighton. Tickets are £16 in advance or £17.50 on the door, while punk legends UK Subs are in action the following night, tickets at £12 or £14.

Book at www.therobin.co.uk or on 01902 401211.

Comic duo mark 25th anniversary

COMEDY stars Reeves and Mortimer will perform in Birmingham as part of their forthcoming national tour.

The duo's live show, 25 years of Reeves and Mortimer: The Poignant Moments, plays at the Barclaycard Arena on December 9.

The show is a celebration of the first 25 years of their professional collaboration from Vic Reeves Big Night Out, through Smell of Reeves & Mortimer, Bang, Bang It's Reeves & Mortimer, Shooting Stars and House Of Fools.

For more details, or for ticket information, visit www.barclycardarena.co.uk

X Factor winner has All That Jazz

HIT musical Chicago tops the list of dazzling new productions announced at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham.

The award-winning musical Chicago will be the Christmas show at the Station Street venue. It will be staged December 12 to 31. The casting has yet to be announced.

Fans don't have to wait that long, however, as the musical is being staged at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from June 20-25, starring X Factor winner Sam Bailey, former EastEnders actor John Partridge and another former soap star Hayley Tamaddon. For ticket details, www.grandtheatre.co.uk

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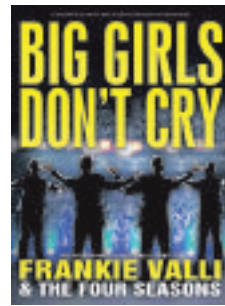
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CHOICE



Michael McIntyre

Michael McIntyre's Big Show (BBC1, 7pm)

New series. The lively comedian hosts an evening of entertainment, recorded in front of an audience assembled at London's Theatre Royal on Drury Lane. Each week, Michael introduces sets by his fellow stand-ups, musical performances, dance revues and various other hijinks. He begins by inviting R&B star Tinie Tempah to perform, and the Peres Brothers Group put on a dazzling acrobatic show. The host also hijacks former Spice Girl Geri Horner's mobile phone in Celebrity Send To All, which sees him fire of an embassassing message to all the contacts in her directory, and one unsuspecting member of the public is given a chance to sing a special duet with Michael Ball.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** MasterChef. (R) **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day one at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.25** Can't Touch This. **6.15** **Pointless Celebrities.** Brix Smith-Start, Jonathan Phang, Amy Childs, Sam Faiers, Grace Woodward, Brendan Courtney, Leo Stafford and Nicky Clarke all take part in the unorthodox quiz show. **7.00** **Michael McIntyre's Big Show.** New series. The comedian hosts an evening of entertainment at London's Theatre Royal, beginning with music by Tinie Tempah and acrobatics by the Peres Brothers Group. **7.55** **The National Lottery: Win Your Wish List.** A former soldier and his wife team up to answer a selection of questions in the hope of winning life-changing prizes from their personal wish list. Shane Richie hosts. Includes the Lotto and Thunderball draws, with Kate Garraway. **8.45** **Casualty.** Rita receives the surprise of her life and struggles to control her emotions when a face from her past arrives at the ED. Medical drama, starring Chloe Howman. **9.35** **Mrs Brown's Boys.** Agnes and the Brown family await the fruits of their fraud after faking Grandad's death to get a payout, but the insurance company starts to grow suspicious. (R) **10.05** BBC News; Weather. **10.25** **Match of the Day.** Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Norwich City v Sunderland at Carrow Road and Chelsea v Manchester City at Stamford Bridge. National Lottery Update. **11.45** **Live at the Apollo.** Leading performers on the stand-up circuit share their light-hearted views on modern life in this show recorded before a packed house at London's Hammersmith Apollo. (R) **12.20** Snooker: World Championship Extra. **3.20** Snooker Classic Matches. **5.20** Weather for the Week Ahead. **5.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.25 **Film:** The Magic Box. (1951) **8.10** Natural World. (R) **9.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **10.00** Live Snooker: The World Championship. **12.00** Rick Stein: From Venice to Istanbul. (R) **1.00** **Film:** Lust for Life. (1956) Biopic of Van Gogh, starring Kirk Douglas. **3.00** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.45** Flog It! (R) **4.30** Live Snooker: The World Championship. The afternoon session on day one at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **5.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **6.00** **Bake Off: Creme de la Creme.** Chef Tom Kerridge hosts the search for Britain's best team of pastry chefs. Joining him at one of the country's grandest stately homes are 15 teams of pastry chefs, all wanting to prove that they are the "crème de la crème". (R) **7.00** **Live Snooker: The World Championship.** The concluding session on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, where the first-round match featuring Stuart Bingham reaches a conclusion. **8.00** **Grand Tours of Scotland.** Paul Merton paddles a replica of a Rob Roy canoe from the 1890s along now-dissused steamer routes, going from loch to loch in Argyll before heading out to Islay. **8.30** **Dad's Army.** Mainwaring and the platoon dress as firemen to take part in an initiative exercise, but soon find themselves tackling a real fire. Comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and Clive Dunn. (R) **9.00** **Tom Jones' 1950s: The Decade That Made Me.** Tom Jones recalls his formative years in South Wales, in the first of four retrospective documentaries in which celebrated musicians look back at the decades that defined them. **10.00** **Shirley.** Biopic of Shirley Bassey, charting the singer's early career, from her roots in 1930s Cardiff to the start of her rise to stardom in the 1960s. Ruth Negga (Misfits) stars. (R) **11.10** **Snooker: The World Championship.** Jason Mohammad presents highlights of the evening session on the opening day at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. **12.00** **Film:** First Snow. (2006) **1.35** **Film:** Freestyle. (2010) **2.55** This Is BBC Two. **5.30** Great British Garden Revival. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITY: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.15** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Sooty. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Nerds & Monsters. (R) **7.45** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.20** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.29** Regional Programme. **12.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.30** **Film:** Superman. (1978) Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve. **4.25** The Wine Show. **5.30** Regional Programme. Weather. **5.45** ITV News; Weather. **6.00** **You've Been Framed! Goes Wild.** Harry Hill presents a selection of the wildest clips submitted to the show, including a video that demonstrates why breaking wind while taking a selfie is a bad idea. **7.00** **Bang on the Money.** New series. Rickie Haywood-Williams and Melvin Odomo host the show in which two teams of friends aim to hit a target number in a series of physical and mental challenges. **8.00** **Britain's Got Talent.** The nationwide talent contest continues as Ant and Dec go behind-the-scenes at the second round of auditions to meet some of this year's hopeful entertainers. As ever, Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, Alesha Dixon and David Walliams take their seats on the judges' panel to rate the performances. Plus, both the Georgie hosts and all four judges have access to a Golden Buzzer, which they can use to send any entrant they believe has that extra something special straight through to the live semi-finals. **9.20** **Play to the Whistle.** New series. Holly Willoughby returns with the sports-themed comedy panel show, as Frank Lampard and Bradley Walsh are joined by Richard Osman, Tom Daley and Rob Beckett. **10.05** ITV News; Weather. **10.20** **Film:** 2 Fast 2 Furious. (2003) A disgraced cop is given a chance to redeem himself by going undercover to bring a drug trafficker to justice. Thriller sequel, with Paul Walker. **12.15** Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Newscreen. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The King of Queens. (R) **6.35** Freeride World Tour. **7.05** The Grid. **7.30** MSA British Rally Championship. **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** The Morning Line. **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.30** Formula 1: Chinese Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. **2.00** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Ayr and Newbury. **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. **5.30** Homes by the Sea. **6.30** **Channel 4 News.** **7.00** **Film: Ender's Game.** (2013) Premiere. In the future, the human race has survived conflict with an alien race, but the prospect of war breaking out again is a constant threat. A gifted boy is selected as a potential military commander for the coming conflict, and subjected to a grueling training program to prove his worth. Sci-fi adventure based on Orson Scott Card's novel, starring Asa Butterfield, Harrison Ford and Ben Kingsley. **9.15** **Film: Die Hard 2.** (1990) Tough cop John McClane arrives at an airport to pick up his wife, but finds himself plunged into a bloody life-or-death struggle. He must battle terrorists who have seized control of the terminal as part of a campaign to secure the release of a convicted drug baron. Action thriller sequel, starring Bruce Willis, Bonnie Bedelia, William Sadler, Franco Nero and William Atherton. **11.40** **Jimmy Carr: Laughing & Joking.** Stand-up comedy with the host of 8 Out of 10 Cats, recorded at London's Hammersmith Apollo in November last year, featuring his familiar brand of near-the-knuckle humour. (R) **12.35** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. The chef helps the owners of Jack's Waterfront, Michigan. (R) **1.30** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Trevor demands Ste and Harry start paying their way. Nico worries Sienna has remembered everything, and Louis books a romantic getaway. (R) **3.40** Kirstie's Handmade Treasures. Flower arranging at the Royal Cornwall Show. (R) **4.00** Selling Houses with Amanda Lamb. Three homeowners in Luton compete to sell their homes. **4.55** Location, Location, Location. Two couples in Gloucestershire search for properties to reflect their new lifestyles. (R) **5.50** The King of Queens. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **9.30** The Saturday Show Live. **11.30** Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud 2. (R) **12.25** Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.25** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **2.25** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **3.20** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **4.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **5.15** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.10** **NCIS: Los Angeles.** A rocket engine expert is killed, leaving Eric to go undercover to ensure that classified technology remains secure. **7.05** **NCIS: New Orleans.** A man is killed during a city-wide blackout, and the team suspects his death is connected to the activities of opportunist thieves using the power cut as cover for a looting spree. **8.00** **NCIS.** DiNozzo, Bishop and her husband investigate a terrorist threat while they are stuck at Washington Dulles airport during bad weather at Thanksgiving weekend. **8.55** **5 News Weekend.** **9.00** **The Championship: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's matches from the Championship, including Birmingham City v Burnley at St Andrew's, and Sheffield Wednesday v Ipswich Town at Hillsborough. Plus, a round-up of all the goals, the main talking points, and interviews with a selection of players and managers. **10.00** **Goal Rush: Football League Tonight.** Kelly Cates and George Riley present a round-up of the latest matches in League One and League Two, including Burton Albion v Barnsley, and Accrington Stanley v Morecambe. **10.30** **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** Part two of two. Gibbs continues to blame himself for Kate's death, and enlists Jenny's help to track down Art – but they are nearly killed in a shoot-out. (R) **11.25** **NCIS: Greatest Ever Episodes.** The entombed body of a Marine sergeant is found, with evidence indicating he was buried alive. Meanwhile, Ziva David returns to replace Kate. (R) **12.15** SuperCasino. **3.10** Law & Order: Special Victims Unit. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 A History of Ancient Britain **8.00** Human Planet **9.00** Follow the Money **11.00** Dusty Springfield at the BBC **12.00** Definitely Dusty **1.00** Queens of Soul **2.00** Classic Soul at the BBC **3.00** Dusty Springfield at the BBC **4.00** Close

ITV4

11.00 Britain's Got Talent **12.25** Britain's Got More Talent **1.30** The Almost Impossible Gameshow **2.30** Scorpion **3.30** Film: Small Soldiers (1998) **4.35** FYI Daily **4.40** Film: Small Soldiers (1998) **5.40** Film: Scooby-Doo (2002) **6.55** FYI Daily **7.00** Film: Scooby-Doo (2002) **7.30** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **8.30** FYI Daily **8.35** Film: Mr Bean's Holiday (2007) **9.20** Britain's Got More Talent **10.25** Celebrity Juice **11.10** Family Guy **12.40** American Dad! **1.35** The Cleveland Show **2.25** @elevenish **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3**

1.55 Inspector Morse **6.20** Film: Lumbo: In Lady in Waiting (1971) **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.00** Blue Murder **1.30** Doctor at Large **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping **ITV4**

11.45 Film: The Far Country (1954) **12.45** Film: The Secret War of Harry Frigg (1967) **1.50** FYI Daily **1.55** Film: The Secret War of Harry Frigg (1967) **3.00** British Superbike Championship Highlights **4.00** Film: Goldfinger (1964) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** Film: Goldfinger (1964) **6.20** The Boxing Mavericks **7.20** The Big Fish Off **8.20** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **9.25** FYI Daily **9.30** Film: Jackie Chan's First Strike (1996) **10.00** Film: Out for Justice (1991) **11.05** FYI Daily **11.10** Film: Out for Justice (1991) **11.55** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **1.00** FYI Daily **1.05** Film: The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford (2007) **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4**

1.30 Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.30** The Goldbergs **4.00** Film: Bride Wars (2009) **5.45** Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Get Him to the Greek (2010) **11.10** Gogglebox **12.50** Rude Tube **1.55** The IT Crowd **2.50** How I Met Your Mother **3.35** Gogglebox **Film4**

1.00 Cleeves (1995) **3.00** A Monster in Paris (2011) **4.45** Imagine That (2009) **6.55** One Day (2011) **9.00** Faster (2010) **10.55** Fright Night (1985) **1.05** Nosferatu the Vampire (1979) **3.20** Close

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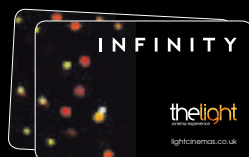


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CHOICE



Paul McCartney with Downton Abbey's Jim Carter
Jim Carter: Lonnie Donegan And Me (ITV, 10.20pm)
The Downton Abbey star examines the influence of the 1950s singer, who released six number one singles at the height of the skiffle craze and was cited by John Lennon and Paul McCartney as a major influence in writing their own songs. Carter remembers how he saw the singer perform at a seaside variety show when he was 11, and discovers the origins of skiffle music, revealing how Donegan was introduced to American folk music during national service. Featuring 1950s archive footage and interviews with some of the acclaimed musicians who were inspired by Donegan's music.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. 7.35 Match of the Day. (R) **9.00 The Andrew Marr Show.** **10.00 The Big Questions.** **11.00 Regional Programme.** **12.15 Bargain Hunt.** (R) **1.00 BBC News: Weather.** **1.15 Homes Under the Hammer.** (R) **2.15 Flog It!** (R) **3.15 Escape to the Country.** (R) **4.00 Points of View.** **4.15 LifeLine.** **4.25 Songs of Praise.** **5.00 Life in the Air.**
6.00 Paul O'Grady: The Sally Army and Me. Paul goes to Athens to assist with the migrant crisis. He also meets the leader of the charity and poses some hard questions, and helps a woman struggling to feed her children.
6.30 BBC News.
6.50 Regional Programme.
7.00 Countryfile. Joe Crowley and Anita Rani visit Dumfries and Galloway. Joe meets a cattle farmer trying to restore the popularity of a famous local breed, while Anita joins a photographer looking for wildlife at night and meets a group of volunteers planting trees in the mountains. Sean Fletcher helps out with restoration work at a medieval building in the Peak District. Adam Henson meets another nominee for Countryfile's Farming Hero, and Tom Heap investigates whether 2016 will be a hard year for farmers. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.
8.00 Antiques Roadshow. The team values more rarities at Hanbury Hall, Droitwich. Items featured include a jacket designed by Peter Blake, a nude painting and a sketch of Napoleon on his deathbed.
9.00 Undercover. Maya resumes her legal struggle with the US authorities, leading to a revelation that rocks her marriage to the core. Nick is confronted with a ghost from his past.
10.00 BBC News.
10.20 Regional Programme.
10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action.
11.40 Room 101 - Extra Storage. Extended version in which Frank Skinner invites Strictly head judge Len Goodman, actress and impressionist Ronni Ancona and quick-witted comic Tim Vine to discuss their pet hates. (R)
12.20 Snooker: World Championship Extra. **3.20 Snooker Classic Matches.** **4.20 Weather for the Week Ahead.**

BBC2

6.30 This Farming Life. (R) **7.30 Gardeners' World.** (R) **8.00 An Island Parish.** (R) **8.30 The Beechgrove Garden.** **9.00 Countryfile.** (R) **10.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship.** **12.15 MOTD2 Extra.** **1.00 Live Snooker: The World Championship.** Coverage of the second session on the second day.
6.00 Jungle Animal Hospital: Natural World. The work of dedicated staff at an animal hospital in Guatemala, whose wards are full of exotic patients, many of them orphans rescued from the illegal pet trade. The film follows the team in their busiest year yet as they nurse the animals back to health, select a troop of spider monkeys for release and prepare a flock of precious scarlet macaws for freedom. (R)
7.00 Jumbo: The Plane That Changed the World. Documentary examining the origins and development of the Boeing 747, which was the world's first wide-bodied commercial airliner and revolutionised air travel after coming into service in 1970. In interviews filmed on the original prototype, chief engineer Joe Sutter and his team describe the challenges they faced, from exploding engines to vibrations that threatened to tear the aircraft apart, and test pilot Brian Wygle reveals how on the first flight they hooked up car batteries as back-ups in case of engine failure. (R)
8.00 Natural Born Winners. The athletes move on to India, where they are introduced to Kalaripayattu, a fighting style with a range of acrobatic moves and weapons that is considered the root of martial arts.
9.00 Horizon: Should We Close Our Zoos? Liz Bonnin reports on issues concerning zoos, exploring their role in preserving endangered species.
10.00 Film: The Spectacular Now. (2013) Premiere. A teenage loner bonds with a drunken classmate who helps her create a new persona for herself to boost her confidence. Drama, starring Miles Teller and Shailene Woodley.
11.30 Snooker: The World Championship. **12.20 The People v OJ Simpson: American Crime Story.** (R) **1.05 Sign Zone: Countryfile.** (R) **2.05 Holby City.** (R) **3.00 This Is BBC Two.**

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knockers Street. **6.15 Bottom Knockers Street.** (R) **6.25 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.35 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **6.45 Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures.** (R) **7.00 Signed Stories: Share a Story.** (R) **7.05 Sooty.** (R) **7.15 Super 4.** (R) **7.30 News & Monsters.** (R) **7.45 The Tom & Jerry Show.** (R) **8.00 Teen Titans Go!** (R) **8.25 ITV News.** **8.30 Weekend.** **9.25 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **10.20 Murder, She Wrote.** (R) **11.20 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **12.25 ITV News: Weather.** **12.30 The Jeremy Kyle Show.** (R) **1.30 River Monsters.** (R) **2.35 Big Star's Little Star.** (R) **3.35 Britain's Got Talent.** (R) **5.00 Tipping Point.** (R)
6.00 All Star Family Fortunes. Opera singer Paul Potts and former MP Ann Widdecombe team up with their families in an attempt to win money for charity. Game show, hosted by Vernon Kay. (R)
6.35 Regional Programme: Weather. **6.45 ITV News: Weather.**
7.00 The Chase Celebrity Special. Shane Williams, Sair Khan, Milton Jones and Tanni Grey-Thompson work as a team to take on quiz genius the Chaser and secure a cash prize for charity.
8.00 The Durrells. Margo takes pride in her new job, but soon discovers where her greatest talent lies. Gerry and Leslie's social lives leave Louise wondering if she made a mistake coming to Corfu.
9.00 Home Fires. The Czech officers organise a dance to keep morale up as the Battle of Britain intensifies. Joyce has some advice for Sarah which is not well-received, while Pat realises that somebody knows about her relationship with Marek. Allison's secret work for the police leaves her forced to decide where her loyalties lie. Steph fears that Stan is becoming a bad influence on his son, and Frances finds out that Peter's affair was more complicated than she thought.
10.05 ITV News: Weather.
10.20 Jim Carter: Lonnie Donegan And Me. The Downton Abbey star examines the influence of the 1950s singer on pop music. He discovers the origins of skiffle music and recalls his own experiences of seeing Donegan perform.
11.25 Premiership Rugby Union. **12.15 Jackpot247.** **3.00 British Superbike Championship Highlights.**

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40 The King of Queens.** (R) **7.05 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD.** **8.00 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **8.30 Everybody Loves Raymond.** (R) **9.30 Sunday Brunch.** **1.30 Formula 1: Chinese Grand Prix Highlights.** **3.30 Location, Location, Location.** (R) **4.30 A Place in the Sun: Home or Away.** **5.30 Channel 4 News.**
6.00 Grand Designs: Living in the Country. Kevin McCloud looks at the challenges of self-building in the countryside, where design must embrace and enhance tradition, yet often overcome stringent planning constraints. Drawing on footage from the show's 15-year history, as well as new visits to extraordinary homes, he finds out how pioneers at the forefront of architecture are transforming agricultural and historic buildings, and bringing cutting-edge contemporary design to rural parts. (R)
7.00 The Fearless Chef. New series. Chef and restaurateur Kiran Jethwa goes on a culinary world tour, tracing ingredients to their source and preparing meals in unusual locations. His travels begin in Bolivia, where he goes in search of coca leaves, which can be used as a herb in tea and cooking. He meets some local farmers and harvests the leaves on sheer valley slopes, before using his crop to make a marinade for llama meat.
8.00 Hidden Britain by Drone. Part two of two. Tony Robinson presents aerial footage of a shipyard where aircraft carriers are built and a shipwreck on the Kent coast that is filled with explosives.
9.00 Indian Summers. Aafin tries to prevent a bombing during Simla's silver jubilee celebrations without exposing his own secrets, but by enlisting Soon's help, he places her life in danger.
10.00 Gogglebox. Capturing the households' instant reactions to what they are watching on TV from the comfort of their own sofas. (R)
11.05 Film: Mud. (2012) Premiere. Two boys find a fugitive hiding out on an island on the Mississippi and help reunite him with his lost love. Drama, starring Matthew McConaughey.
1.05 Embarrassing Bodies Down Under. (R) **1.55 Come Dine with Me.** (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Peppa Pig. **6.05 Bananas in Pyjamas.** (R) **6.20 Angelina Ballerina.** (R) **6.35 Bob the Builder.** (R) **6.45 Ticky Toc.** (R) **6.55 Zack and Quack.** (R) **7.10 Roodbarb and Custard Too.** (R) **7.15 Make Way for Noddy.** (R) **7.30 Paw Patrol.** (R) **7.45 Little Princess.** (R) **7.55 Pip Ahoy!** (R) **8.05 Blaze and the Monster Machines.** (R) **8.35 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom.** (R) **8.50 Wanda and the Alien.** (R) **9.05 Toby's Travelling Circus.** (R) **9.20 Jelly Jam.** (R) **9.35 LazyTown.** (R) **10.05 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.** **10.40 The Championship: Football League Tonight.** (R) **11.40 Goal Rush: Football League Tonight.** (R) **12.15 The Gadget Show.** (R) **1.15 Film: The Princess Bride.** (1987) Comic fantasy adventure, starring Cary Elwes. **3.15 Film: Bend It Like Beckham.** (2002) Comedy, starring Parminder Nagra and Keira Knightley. **5.30 Film: Hercules.** (1997) Disney animated adventure, with the voice of Tate Donovan.
7.10 New That's Funny! A collection of internet-sourced videos with a family friendly hook, featuring laugh-out-loud unexpected personal moments now being shared with the world.
8.00 Penn & Teller: Fool Us in Vegas. An award-winning magician performs one of his favourite routines, the president of the Yale University Magic Club asks Jonathan Ross to assist with a card trick, and an Australian illusionist tries to dazzle Penn and Teller. The duo conclude the show with their own take on pulling a rabbit out of a hat.
8.55 5 News Weekend.
9.00 Film: Going the Distance. (2010) Premiere. A woman from San Francisco falls in love with a man she meets while spending a summer in New York. When the time comes for her to return home, they decide to try to keep their relationship going, despite being on opposite sides of America. However, their friends become convinced their efforts are doomed to failure. Romantic comedy, starring Drew Barrymore.
11.05 Film: Mars Attacks! (1996) The inhabitants of Earth scramble to repel an invasion by a seemingly invincible Martian army. Tim Burton's sci-fi comedy, starring Jack Nicholson.
1.05 SuperCasino. **3.10 The Tube: Going Underground.** (R) **4.00 Wildlife SOS.** (R) **4.50 Great Artists.** (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Trad Jazz Britannia. **8.00 Film: Rock Around the Clock** (1956) **9.15 Rock 'n' Roll America** **12.15 Natural World: Tiger Island** **1.15 Rich Hall's California Stars** **2.45 Jerusalem: The Making of a Holy City** **3.45 Close**
ITV2
12.00 Take Me Out **1.10 Catchphrase** **1.55 Film: Scooby-Doo** (2002) **2.55 FYI Daily** **3.00 Film: Scooby-Doo** (2002) **3.45 Film: Hotel Transylvania** (2012) **4.50 FYI Daily** **4.55 Film: Britain's Got Talent** **7.00 Britain's Got More Talent** **8.00 Film: After Earth** (2013) **9.00 FYI Daily** **9.05 Film: After Earth** (2013) **10.00 Family Guy** **11.55 American Dad!** **12.55 The Cleveland Show** **1.50 Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records** **2.15 The Hot Desk: Real East** **2.25 Teleshopping** **5.55 ITV2 Nightscreen**
ITV3
11.30 Film: Columbo: Lady in Waiting (1971) **1.10 Film: Black Beauty** (1994) **2.10 FYI Daily** **2.15 Film: Black Beauty** (1994) **3.00 Agatha Christie's Marple** **8.00 Midsomer Murders** **7.00 Doc Martin** **8.00 The Cruise Ship** **8.30 Royal Stories** **9.00 Great Estates of Scotland** **10.10 Film: The Queen** (2006) **11.10 FYI Daily** **11.15 Film: The Queen** (2006) **12.20 Inspector Morse** **2.20 Wycliffe** **3.15 May the Best House Win** **4.55 On the Buses** **5.20 Judge Judy** **5.45 FYI Nightscreen**
ITV4
6.15 Football's Greatest: George Best **6.30 Prawn Stars** **6.55 The Wine Show** **8.00 Premiership Rugby Union** **9.00 Film: Ransom** (1996) **10.05 FYI Daily** **10.10 Film: Ransom** (1996) **11.25 Film: How I Spent My Summer Vacation** (2012) **12.30 FYI Daily** **12.35 Film: How I Spent My Summer Vacation** (2012) **1.20 Hell on Wheels** **2.20 Storage Wars: New York** **2.45 ITV4 Nightscreen** **3.00 Teleshopping**
E4
12.30 Made in Chelsea **1.30 Couples Come Dine with Me** **2.30 The Goldbergs** **3.55 Film: Dear John** (2010) **6.00 The Big Bang Theory** **9.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD** **10.00 Tattoo Fixers** **11.00 The IT Crowd** **12.05 The Aliens** **1.10 The 100** **2.10 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD** **2.55 Tattoo Fixers** **3.50 Hollywood**
Film4
1.10 Escape from the Planet of the Apes (1971) **1.00 Brewster's Millions** (1985) **3.05 City of Ember** (2008) **4.55 Marley and Me** (2005) **7.10 Legend** (1985) **9.00 Now You See Me** (2013) **11.15 Friday the 13th** (2009) **1.10 Room 237** (2012)

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY

Dangerous Woman, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A businesswoman worries she has dementia after becoming forgetful – but something more sinister is at play. Thriller, starring Alicia Leigh Willis. Edited for daytime broadcast. (2015)

TUESDAY

Secrets of Eden, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A detective investigates the deaths of a couple, and becomes convinced the local pastor may be implicated in the tragedy. Drama, starring John Stamos and Anna Gunn. (2012)

WEDNESDAY

Along Came Polly, ITV, 10.45pm

An obsessively cautious man, whose wife left him on their honeymoon, crosses paths with a wildly spontaneous former classmate who throws his well-ordered routine into disarray. Yet in spite of their different outlooks on life, he starts to fall for her. Romantic comedy, starring Ben Stiller, Jennifer Aniston and Philip Seymour Hoffman. (2004)



GoldenEye, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

THURSDAY

The Husband She Met Online, Channel 5, 3.15pm

A woman turns to the internet for romance after breaking up with her unfaithful boyfriend. She thinks she has found the perfect man in the wealthy, charming head of a real-estate company, but soon comes to realise he has an obsessive nature and intends to take control of her life. Thriller, starring Meredith Monroe and Jason Gray-Stanford. (2013)

FRIDAY

The Good Mother, Channel 5, 3.20pm

A troubled teenager is taken in by a kind family, but suspects the mother has murdered her daughter and intends to kill again. Thriller, with Helen Slater. (2013)

GoldenEye, ITV, 10.40pm

James Bond heads for Russia to investigate the connection between the theft of an experimental helicopter and an orbital satellite weapon with the power to devastate entire cities. He discovers both have fallen into the hands of a criminal mastermind. Spy adventure, with Pierce Brosnan. (1995)

An unwelcome surprise is in store for Murray

Ben Miller has been giving his old comedy partner Alexander Armstrong a run for his money in the ubiquity stakes recently.

In February, the former Death in Paradise star returned to his scientific roots (he abandoned a PhD in solid state physics at Cambridge University to concentrate on comedy) by presenting the ITV series It's Not Rocket Science.

And now he's back on the BBC with the new sitcom I Want My Wife Back, which could probably also be counted as a return to familiar ground.

The sitcom is written and produced by Mark Russell and Justin Sbresni, who previously collaborated with Ben on another comedy with a seemingly self-explanatory title, The Worst Week of My Life.

The first series, which aired in 2004, followed publishing executive Howard Steel during the run-up to his wedding, when he found himself plagued by everything from an obsessive ex to a hospitalised grandmother. It was followed by a

second series and festive special, entitled (wait for it) The Worst Christmas of My Life.

However, as you may have already deduced, I Want My Wife Back follows a man whose main concern isn't making it to the church on time but staying out of the divorce court.

Ben stars as Murray, a seemingly happily married man who in this opening episode is in busy arranging a surprise 40th birthday party for his beloved wife Bex (Doc Martin's Caroline Catz, who knows a thing or two about playing long-suffering other halves). But it turns out that he's the one in for a shock when he hears that she's planning to leave him. He desperately tries to find her before the party, and is devastated when she confirms that she really is going.

So, naturally he tries to cancel the bash, only to find it's too late. As the guests begin to arrive, a shell-shocked Murray and Bex struggle to put on a brave face, and things get even worse when someone springs

another very awkward birthday surprise.

Murray's heartbreak may not initially sound all that hilarious, but events will become increasingly farcical. Future episodes will see Murray try to find out exactly why Bex has left him and what he can do to win her back, and his friends, family and colleagues are only too ready to offer their well-meaning, if not always helpful, advice.

And while Murray may be struggling, Ben is definitely having a good time. He says: "I feel incredibly lucky to be back in the BBC comedy fold, playing the incredibly unlucky hero of I Want My Wife Back. With Mainstreet at the helm and Mark Russell and Justin Sbresni on script, this truly feels like a match made in heaven."

Commissioning editor Chris Sussman adds: "It's a very modern farce with a great cast, and I can't wait to see it on TV. The writers do a brilliant job of putting Ben Miller down a hole and then watching him painfully trying to crawl his way out..."



Ben Miller stars in I Want My Wife Back, Monday, BBC1, 9.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

The Hairy Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain BBC2, 6.30pm

Si King and Dave Myers are setting out on a pub crawl with a difference in this new series. Instead of just propping up bars around the country, they'll be unearthing hundreds of years of fascinating history hidden in Britain's public houses, beginning in Yorkshire. They visit an establishment believed to have been drunk dry by troops the night before the Battle of Marston Moor during the English Civil War, while in York they learn about a pub that once doubled as a hospital and has a gruesome history.

TUESDAY

Fierce

ITV, 8pm

He's become a famous face thanks to his BBC shows, but Steve Backshall is journeying to 'the other side' for this six-part new series. In the past, Backshall has proved himself to be a fearless adventurer, somebody who will stop at nothing to explore weird and wonderful wildernesses while getting up close and personal with a variety of creatures. He does the same here – and dices with the death in the process. As the title suggests, the idea is for him to showcase the world's most vicious animals - by meeting them face-to-face. Among the

highlights will be Backshall's efforts to track down the endangered giant river otter, as well as encounters with the giant black caiman, komodo dragons and the fearless honey badger.

WEDNESDAY

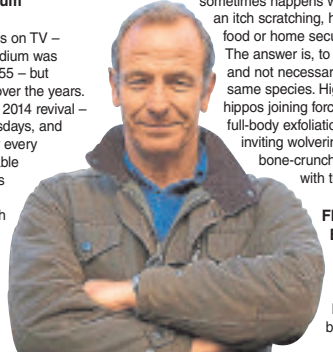
Tonight at the London Palladium ITV, 8pm

It may be one of the oldest formats on TV – Sunday Night at the London Palladium was first shown on ITV way back in 1955 – but it has undergone some changes over the years. In fact, it's even changed since its 2014 revival – the show has now moved to Thursdays, and instead of having a new presenter every week, it's been placed in the capable hands of Bradley Walsh. He brings his old-school light entertainment charm to this week's edition, which sees Cyndi Lauper and the cast of the musical Kinky Boots taking to the stage alongside Diversity, Ronan Keating, Troupe Diabolo, and The Royal British Legion Band and Corps of Drums Romford. If that wasn't eclectic enough, there's also comedy from Seann Walsh.

THURSDAY

Nature's Perfect Partners: Natural World BBC2, 8pm

Bill Bailey narrates this natural history documentary telling the story of some of nature's most extraordinary partnerships, revealing what sometimes happens when animals need an itch scratching, help getting into food or home security assistance. The answer is, to find a partner – and not necessarily one of the same species. Highlights include hippos joining forces with fish for a full-body exfoliation and ravens inviting wolverines over for some bone-crunching assistance with their dinner.



Flying Scotsman with Robson Green, Friday, ITV, 9pm

Bargaining Round Britain with John Sergeant ITV, 8pm

New series. The broadcaster returns to travel more of Britain's canal network,

exploring the extraordinary stories of the people and places on the way. The series starts with John navigating the Peak Forest Canal, which runs through stunning countryside from Buxworth in Derbyshire to Ashton-under-Lyne. Along the way, in Hyde he meets former boxer Ricky Hutton, who discusses his plans to revitalise the area and offer new opportunities to local youngsters, and joins a team of junior archaeologists at Mellor Mill, who are attempting to unearth the remains of what was once one of the world's largest mills.

Flying Scotsman with Robson Green ITV, 9pm

The actor tells the story of the world's most famous steam locomotive, joining the team of craftsman responsible for its restoration and revealing the astonishing story behind its rebirth. Last year, the engine was lying in pieces in a workshop just outside Manchester where a team of engineers used traditional skills to restore the icon to its former glory. Not only will Robson tell the story of its restoration from the hub of the workshop, the Grantchester star also gets involved in the rebuild, meets the men and women responsible for it, and is present to witness the milestones in its reconstruction. And if he's lucky he might even get to fulfil a boyhood dream and ride on its footplate.



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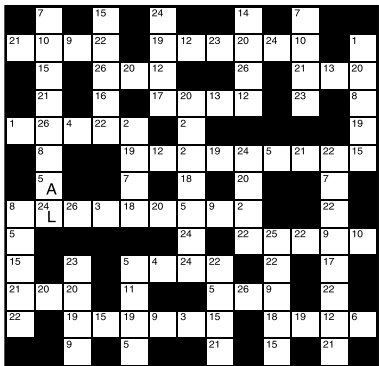
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

T	A	F	C	P	U	K	J	Y	W	N	V	S
I	R	Q	E	M	D	O	G	Z	B	L	H	X

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

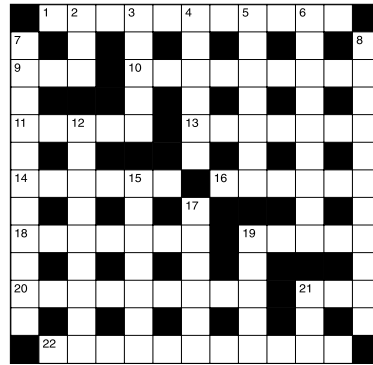
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- It's not only cattle traders who deal here (5-6)
- Tombstone inscription will produce a tear! (3)
- Likely to cause ill-feeling (9)
- Shows deficiencies - in need of tightening up, we hear (5)
- What the referee needs when it comes to blows! (7)
- Discovers how low noises are (6)
- A wheel cover, we hear, is something that people can put on themselves (6)
- Chemical charge after dark, by the sound of it (7)
- Settle and make a fire (5)
- He notes the proceedings minute by minute (9)
- In the freight a residual coal product (3)
- Suffering from cardiac arteriosclerosis? (4-7)

Down

- It whirls round the summit (3)
- Iron's a suit (5)
- Red Indian doctor getting the bird! (6)
- For the practical man art lies in ruins (7)
- Providing a certain name is giving one a claim (9)
- Absence of works of creative imagination will show naivety (11)
- Classify crossword compilers as experts in letter arrangements! (4-7)
- Shellfish could act as cure (9)
- The road to the cemetery, maybe! (4-3)
- Just the word to open with (6)
- A bed to propagate shoots (5)
- It's used by the driver for ball bearing (3)



Quick Clues:

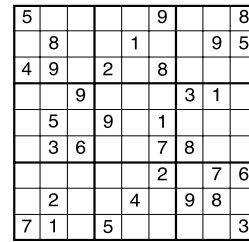
Across

- Own (11)
- Place (3)
- Watchfulness (9)
- Happen again (5)
- Attire (7)
- Chastise (6)
- Thrashed (6)
- Fancy (7)
- Military student (5)
- Fruit (9)
- Brown (3)
- Handed down as custom (11)

Down

- Sever (3)
- At no time (5)
- Native American tent (6)
- Outshine (7)
- Produced (9)
- Suitable (11)
- High boots (11)
- Receptacle (9)
- Clergyman's salary (7)
- Cease (6)
- Creed (5)
- Beverage (3)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

1	9	5	7	3	2	4	6	8
3	2	8	1	6	4	7	5	9
7	6	4	9	5	8	1	2	3
8	4	6	2	7	1	3	9	5
5	7	1	8	9	3	6	4	2
9	3	2	5	4	6	8	1	7
6	8	9	4	2	7	5	3	1
4	5	7	3	1	9	2	8	6
2	1	3	6	8	5	9	7	4

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Robs; 3 Encamped; 9 Learner; 10 Trade; 11 Gooseberries; 13 Onsets; 15 Thrush; 17 Dark thoughts; 20 Aspen; 21 Inhuman; 22 Finished; 23 Trot. Down: 1 Religion; 2 Bravo; 4 Nurses; 5 Afterthought; 6 Plateau; 7 Duet; 8 Undertakings; 12 Chestnut; 14 Sharpen; 16 Thrive; 18 Homer; 19 Calif. QUICK - Across: 1 Such; 3 Astonish; 9 Amateur; 10 Comic; 11 Discomposure; 13 Recess; 15 Cohere; 17 Overstrained; 20 Again; 21 Collide; 22 Skeleton; 23 News. Down: 1 Standard; 2 Grass; 4 Scrape; 5 Occasionally; 6 Immerse; 7 Hack; 8 Remonstrance; 12 Headless; 14 Caviar; 16 Stucco; 18 Noise; 19 Pass.

Quiz

- Which international cricket team has been captained by Kepler Wessels?
- What do the letters HRT stand for?
- Which country is called Hanguk in its native language?
- What is the Severn bore?
- For what is the Spanish city Jerez de la Frontera famous?
- What is the title of the Marquess of Blandford's father?
- In which year was the Thames barrier completed?
- What is the common name of the fruit Citrus reticulata?
- How is author Samuel Langhorne Clemens better known?
- Which king had to deal with the Peasants' Revolt of 1381?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Jupiter; 2 Northern Lights; 3 Dinah

Sheridan; 4 Diphtheria; 5 Iron; 6 Zaire;

7 Bronze Age; 8 Seve Ballesteros; 9 The

Raven; 10 Edinburgh.

Niner: RELOADING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

3856145 gives a seaman,
794567 gives a churchman,
521145 gives an athlete.



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Spacious semi has rural views



THIS deceptively spacious extended traditional semi in Chester Road, Stonnall has countryside views.

It is for sale through Skitts at £214,950.

Having an entrance hall with stairs off and understairs storage, it has a through lounge with French-style patio doors and a brick built feature fireplace. There is a kitchen with an archway to a lobby with a door to the outside, a dining room, a utility area and a downstairs WC.

Upstairs two of the three bedrooms have fitted wardrobes and the bathroom has a white suite with a shower over the bath. Outside is an attractive rear garden with decking, lawn and flower borders.

For further information contact Skitts on 01922 478104 or visit www.skitts.net

Executive-style four-bed home with parking

THIS executive-style four-bedroomed home has a large L-shaped conservatory, and lies in Ivy Grove, Walsall – a secluded cul-de-sac.

It is for sale through Paul Dubberley at £230,000.

With gas central heating and double glazing it has an entrance porch, an entrance hall with wooden flooring, three reception rooms with wooden flooring, a breakfast kitchen with an integrated oven, hob and extractor above, breakfast bar area, integrated dishwasher and fridge/freezer, large conservatory, utility, storage room, four good-sized bedrooms (master en-suite) and a family bathroom. The rear garden includes a patio area and raised lawn. For further information contact Paul Dubberley on 01902 633323 or visit www.pauldubberley.co.uk



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Guide: £50,000 plus



*Please note charges may apply in addition to the purchase price on some lots

**For a definition of Guide Price & Reserve price please refer to our catalogue or website



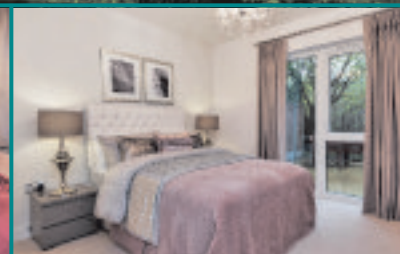
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last few remaining

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Bilston
01902 505974

Gorway Close
Walsall




IMMACULATELY PRESENTED FOUR BEDROOM FAMILY HOME LOCATED IN A QUIET CUL-DE-SAC IN THE HIGHLY REGARDED "HIGHGATE" AREA OF WALSALL. Benefiting From Double Glazing And Gas Central Heating The Property Briefly Comprises Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Conservatory, Recently Fitted Kitchen, Downstairs W.C., Four Bedrooms And Modern Family Bathroom.

Large Garage, Fore Gardens With Driveway, And A Secluded Rear Garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £300,000

Lakeside Close
Willenhall



Modern 3 bedroom detached house with en-suite to main, 2 reception rooms, downstairs wc, kitchen, main bathroom, garage and driveway, double glazing and central heating, front and rear gardens, with no upward chain, call Paul Dubberley to view. EPC D

OFFERS AROUND: £180,000

New Road
Willenhall




UNIQUE APARTMENT IN CONVERTED DEVELOPMENT IMMACULATELY PRESENTED SHOW HOME STYLE Internal Inspection Is Essential To Appreciate The Size And Specification Of This Unique Property, Which Briefly Comprises Of: Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen Diner With Island, Two Good Sized Bedrooms (Master With Ensuite Shower Room), And Family Bathroom. EPC - C

OFFERS AROUND: £130,000

Bloxwich Road South
Willenhall



STAR BUY EXTENDED FAMILY HOME NOT TO BE MISSED Three Bedroom Extended Family Home In Willenhall Briefly Comprising Of: Porch, Hall, Lounge, Modern Kitchen, Conservatory, Utility Room, Three Bedrooms, Ensuite Shower Room, Family Bathroom, Garage, Front Driveway And Rear Garden NO CHAIN CALL 01902 633323

OFFERS AROUND: £140,000

Bradleys Lane
Coseley



NEW Immaculate and refurbished 3 bedroom traditional detached house, entrance porch and hallway, lounge, beautiful kitchen/diner, conservatory, downstairs wc, modern bathroom, central heating and double glazing, garage and driveway, front and rear gardens, no upward chain, call Paul Dubberley to view.

OFFERS AROUND: £200,000

Bushbury Road
Wolverhampton



3 Bedroom end terraced house with no upward chain, has to be viewed to appreciate. 2 reception rooms, modern kitchen, modern bathroom, central heating and double glazing (where specified) parking and rear garden.

OFFERS AROUND: £120,000

Barn Farm Close
Bilston



Well Presented Two Bed End Of Terrace In Popular Cul-de-sac Location. Lounge, Dining Kitchen, Two Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Rear Garden And Off Road Parking.

Viewings Highly Recommended

OFFERS AROUND: £99,950

Broad Street
Bilston



A Fantastic 3 bed extended detached house with gas central heating & double glazing. The property is within walking distance of Bilston town, the metro and main bus routes. The property briefly comprises, porch, hallway, lounge, lounge / dining room, kitchen, utility room, guest cloakroom, 3 bedrooms, bathroom, rear garden, off road parking and garage.

OFFERS IN THE REGION OF £150,000

Constantine Way
Bilston



An Immaculate Detached Residence on the popular Bridgefields Estate. Gas Central Heating, UPVC Double Glazing & No Upward Chain. Spacious Family accommodation Briefly Comprising: Reception Hall, Guest Cloakroom, Lounge, Breakfast Kitchen, Conservatory, Three Bedrooms, Bathroom, Front & Rear Gardens, Driveway & Garage.

ASKING PRICE OFF £169,995



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- FREE 'On The Market' Listing

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pauldubberley
the estate agent

Dace Road
Wolverhampton



Well Presented Three/Four Bedroom Town House On Sought After Development Hall, Downstairs Bedroom/Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Downstairs W.C., Lounge, Three Bedrooms And Family Bathroom. The Property Further Benefits From Rear Garden And Open Views To Front.

OFFERS AROUND: £135,000

Uplands Avenue
Willenhall



Two Bedroom Detached Bungalow, Porch, Hallway, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen, Two Bedrooms And Family Bathroom. The Bungalow Further Benefits From Front And Rear Gardens, Driveway And Single Garage!

VIEWINGS HIGHLY ADVISED!

OFFERS AROUND: £110,000

Rollsby Drive
Willenhall



SHOW HOME STYLE PROPERTY - LUXURIOUSLY MODERNISED THROUGHOUT NOT TO BE MISSED Large Lounge, Spacious Breakfast Kitchen With Dining Area, Three Bedrooms And Hi Specification Family Bathroom. The Property Further Benefits From A Large Rear Garden, Driveway To Front, And Further Gated Off Road Parking Leading To Single Garage!

OFFERS AROUND: £165,000

Blakenall Lane
Walsall



Paul Dubberley Are Pleased To Present This Extended Three Bedroom Family Home, Porch, Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Utility, Downstairs Shower Room, Three Bedrooms And Family Bathroom.

OFFERS AROUND: £115,000

Humphries Crescent



A newly exclusive development of 3 detached bungalows, shared tarmacked driveway leading to gravelled parking at front of bungalow. Comprising entrance hall, en-suite to main bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, lounge, double glazing and central heating, driveway and gardens.

OFFERS AROUND: £165,000

Lawnside Green
Bilston



New to market 3 Bedroom terraced house on the popular Stowlaw estate, good size rooms and comprising, driveway, entrance porch and hallway, downstairs wc, lounge/diner, modern kitchen, modern bathroom, central heating and double glazing, rear garden, no upward chain, call now for details.

OFFERS AROUND: £115,000

Mount Pleasant
Bilston



This traditional mid terraced property with the benefit of upvc double glazing & gas central heating throughout, briefly comprises, two separate living areas, cellar, kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms and rear garden.

OFFERS IN EXCESS OF £80,000

Rocket Pool Drive
Bilston



New to market 3 Bedroom terraced property with no upward chain and ready to move straight into, entrance porch and hallway, lounge and dining room, modern kitchen, modern bathroom, good size bedrooms, central heating and double glazing (where specified)


OFFERS AROUND: £110,000

Spring Road
Wolverhampton



New to market Good size and potential with this 3 bedroom end terraced house and no upward chain, 2 reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, good size bedrooms, garden to rear and the land to side including income from the advertising board, call now for a viewing.

OFFERS AROUND: £129,950



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DAW END LANE, RUSHALL WALSALL

- AUCTION PROPERTY
- FOUR BEDROOMS
- SPACIOUS 20FT THROUGH LOUNGE/DINING ROOM
- BATHROOM AND SEPARATE SHOWER ROOM



- AMPLE OFF ROAD PARKING
- NO ONWARD CHAIN
- GARDEN AT REAR
- VIEWING RECOMMENDED

GUIDE PRICE £160,000



BROAD LANE, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- AUCTION PROPERTY
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS



- CLOSE TO BLOXWICH RAILWAY STATION
- NO UPWARD CHAIN!!
- TWO BEDROOMS
- VIEWING RECOMMENDED

GUIDE PRICE £73,500



ST CLEMENTS AVENUE, LEAMORE WALSALL

- TOWN HOUSE STYLE PROPERTY
- FOUR BEDROOMS
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING



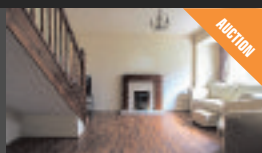
- UPSTAIRS BATHROOM
- LOUNGE AND KITCHEN
- REAR GARDEN
- BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY

GUIDE PRICE £70,000



SIGNAL GROVE, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- TWO BEDROOMS
- LOUNGE
- KITCHEN
- UPSTAIRS BATHROOM



- TWO ALLOCATED PARKING SPACES
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING
- NO ONWARD CHAIN

GUIDE PRICE £75,000



GLASTONBURY CRESCENT, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- AUCTION PROPERTY
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS
- THREE BEDROOMS
- KITCHEN



- BATHROOM
- REAR GARDEN
- NO CHAIN
- VIEWING ESSENTIAL

GUIDE PRICE £75,000



HEATHER ROAD, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- AUCTION PROPERTY
- LARGE CORNER PLOT
- THREE BEDROOMS
- DETACHED WOODEN OUTBUILDING



- CUL DE SAC POSITION
- NO ONWARD CHAIN
- SELLING? WE OFFER FREE SELLING VALUATIONS!
- Need a Mortgage? Call us on 01922 478104

GUIDE PRICE £75,000



THE CHAPEL BROAD WAY, PELSALL WALSALL

- AUCTION PROPERTY
- ATTACHED ONE BEDROOM BUNGALOW
- POPULAR PELSALL AREA
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING



- FITTED KITCHEN
- LOUNGE AND KITCHEN
- COMMUNAL GARDENS
- COMMUNAL PARKING

GUIDE PRICE £79,950



MULBERRY PLACE, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- AUCTION PROPERTY
- THREE BEDROOMS
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED WINDOWS



- UPSTAIRS BATHROOM
- GARDENS AND OFF ROAD PARKING
- SELLING? WE OFFER FREE SELLING VALUATIONS!
- Need a Mortgage? Call us on 01922 478104

GUIDE PRICE £75,000

NOW TAKING INSTRUCTIONS FOR OUR JUNE AUCTION

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VINCENT STREET, NR HIGHGATE WALSALL

- POPULAR LOCATION
- THREE BEDROOMS
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS
- KITCHEN



- BATHROOM
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED WINDOWS
- NO ONWARD CHAIN

£110,000 Offers



MACKAY ROAD, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- POPULAR LOCATION
- THREE BEDROOMS
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- MAJORITY UPVC DOUBLE GLAZED WINDOWS



- LOUNGE AND DINING ROOMS
- RE-FITTED BATHROOM WITH SHOWER
- OFF ROAD PARKING
- VIEWING RECOMMENDED

£137,500 Offers



STOWE STREET, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- THREE BEDROOMS
- UPSTAIRS BATHROOM
- LOUNGE
- DINING KITCHEN



- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING
- IDEAL FIRST TIME PURCHASE
- INTERNAL VIEWING RECOMMENDED

£97,500 Offers



HARRISON STREET, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- THREE BEDROOMS
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS
- GENEROUS REAR GARDEN
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING



- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING
- NO ONWARD CHAIN
- Selling? We offer free Selling Valuations!
- Need a mortgage? CALL US ON 01922 478104

£174,950 OFFERS



CHESTER ROAD, STONNALL WALSALL

- EXTENDED TRADITIONAL SEMI DETACHED HOUSE
- POPULAR LOCATION NEAR TO STONNALL VILLAGE
- THREE BEDROOMS
- TWO RECEPTION ROOMS



- GARAGE AT REAR
- VIEWING RECOMMENDED
- Selling? We offer free selling valuations
- Need a Mortgage? Call us on 01922 478104

£214,950 OFFERS



HARDEN CLOSE WALSALL

- MODERN DETACHED HOUSE
- FOUR BEDROOMS
- TWO BEDROOMS
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING



- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING
- PRICED TO SELL
- SELLING? WE OFFER FREE SELLING VALUATIONS
- Need a Mortgage? Call us on 01922 478104

£150,000 OFFERS



LYDFORD ROAD, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- MUCH REQUESTED LOCATION
- TWO BEDROOMS
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING



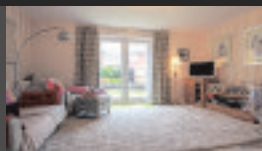
- EXCELLENT RE-FITTED SHOWER ROOM
- RE-FITTED KITCHEN WITH OVEN AND HOB
- DETACHED GARAGE AND UTILITY ROOM
- Selling? We offer FREE selling valuations!

£245,000 OFFERS



CARTBRIDGE LANE SOUTH WALSALL

- EX 'SHOW HOME' MODERN STYLE SEMI
- THREE BEDROOMS AND EN SUITE
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING
- UPVC DOUBLE GLAZING



- NO ONWARD CHAIN
- INTERNAL VIEWING ESSENTIAL
- SELLING? We offer Free Selling Valuations!
- Need a Mortgage? Call us on 01922 478104

£179,950 OFFERS



WALLINGTON CLOSE, BLOXWICH WALSALL

- POPULAR LOCATION
- CUL-DE-SAC POSITION
- TWO BEDROOMS
- GAS CENTRAL HEATING



- SELLING? WE OFFER FREE SELLING VALUATIONS
- NEED A MORTGAGE? Call us on 01922 478104
-

£215,000 OFFERS

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SHARESHILL WARSTONE ROAD
 • Impressive Detached Dormer Bungalow On Extensive Plot
 • Reception Hall, Two Reception Rooms
 • Superb Kitchen



• Four Excellent Bedrooms
 • Luxury Bathroom
 • Ample Off Road Parking
 • Outbuildings

£539,950



WILLENHALL HONEYBOURNE WAY
 • Superb Modern Semi Detached
 • Popular Location
 • Through Lounge / Dining Room
 • Conservatory, Re-fitted Kitchen



• Three Bedrooms, Bathroom
 • Garage
 • Pleasant Gardens, Driveway
 • Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing

£165,000



WILLENHALL DARVEL ROAD
 • Extended Link Detached In Popular Location
 • Hall, Through Lounge / Dining Room
 • Breakfast Kitchen
 • Three Bedrooms, Bathroom

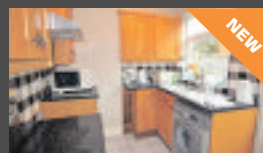


• Garage, Driveway
 • Impressive Corner Plot Gardens
 • Predominantly Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating System

£165,000



WILLENHALL FIBBERSLEY
 • Three Bedroom Semi Detached
 • Highly Sought After Road
 • Hall, Two Reception Rooms
 • Kitchen, Bathroom



• Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Large Front & Rear Gardens
 • Driveway, No Upward Chain

£160,000



DARLASTON BIRDBROOK CLOSE
 • Superb Three Storey End Town House
 • Popular Cul De Sac
 • Hall, Guests Wc, Impressive Lounge
 • Fitted Kitchen



• Three Good Size Bedrooms, Bathroom
 • Driveway, Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Rear Gardens

£155,950



WILLENHALL NEWENT CLOSE
 • Impressive Detached Property
 • Spacious Lounge, Dining Room
 • Fitted Kitchen, Three Bedrooms
 • Luxury Re-Fitted Bathroom



• Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Long Driveway
 • Front And Rear Gardens

OFFERS OVER £150,000



NEW INVENTION FLETCHER ROAD
 • For Sale By Modern Method Of Auction,
 • Starting Bid Price £122,000 Plus
 • Reservation Fee
 • Three Bedroom Link Detached House



• Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Kitchen
 • Bathroom
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Driveway

STARTING BID £122,000



WILLENHALL WALSALL ROAD
 • Beautifully Presented Modern End Terrace
 • Hall, Guests Wc
 • Lounge, Fitted Kitchen
 • Two Bedrooms, Bathroom



• Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Rear Gardens
 • Garage To The Rear

£115,000



WILLENHALL MALVERN CLOSE
 • Deceptively Spacious Semi Detached
 • Two Reception Rooms
 • Extended Breakfast Kitchen
 • Three Good Size Bedrooms, Bathroom



• Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating
 • Garage, Driveway
 • Pleasant Front And Rear Gardens

£135,000



WILLENHALL ASHMORE LAKE ROAD
 • Well Presented Edwardian Semi Detached
 • Two Reception Rooms, Fitted Kitchen
 • Excellent Bathroom
 • Three Bedrooms



• Gas Central Heating System
 • Double Glazing
 • Driveway
 • Pleasant Rear Gardens

OFFERS OVER £110,000



NEW INVENTION RUGELEY AVENUE
 • Spacious End Terrace Property
 • Popular Cul De Sac Location
 • Hall, Through Lounge, Kitchen
 • Three Bedrooms



• Re-fitted Shower Room, Separate Wc
 • Driveway, Rear Gardens, Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • No Chain

£110,000



WILLENHALL LOWBRIDGE CLOSE
 • Well Presented Mid Terrace Property
 • Hall, Through Lounge, Fitted Kitchen
 • Two Double Bedrooms
 • Re-fitted Shower Room



• Front And Rear Gardens
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Double Glazing
 • No Upward Chain

£100,000



WILLENHALL YALE ROAD
 • Superb 3 Bedroom Detached On Popular Estate
 • Hall With Guests Wc • Lounge, Dining Room
 • Breakfast Kitchen • 3 En-suites • Bathroom
 • Driveway • Gas CH • Double Glazing • Gardens

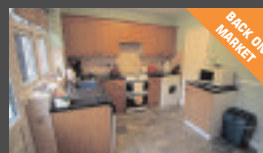


WILLENHALL LAKELOT CLOSE
 • An Impressive 4 Bed Recently Built Detached
 • Hall, Guests Wc • Lounge, Dining Room
 • Excellent Breakfast Kitchen • Family Bathroom
 • En-suite • Garage & Driveway • Gardens

Offers over £215,000



WOODLANDS ESTATE MYRTLE CLOSE
 • Modern Style Two Bedrooms Semi Detached
 • Hall, Lounge
 • Dining Kitchen
 • Re-fitted Shower Room



• Garage, Drive
 • Gardens
 • Gas Central Heating System
 • Double Glazing

£135,000



SNEYD PARK BROCKBRIDGE CLOSE
 • Impressive 3 Bedrooms Semi Detached
 • Lounge • Dining Room • Extended Fitted Kitchen
 • Garage & Driveway • Gas CH • Double Glazing
 • Rear Gardens • No Chain

£155,000



NEW INVENTION BALMORAL DRIVE
 • Spacious 3 Bedroom Semi Detached
 • Through Lounge • Kitchen • Conservatory
 • Loft Room • Bathroom
 • Gas Central Heating, Double Glazing, Rear Gardens

£130,000



WILLENHALL WALKERS FOLD
 • Modern 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Property
 • Hall, Lounge • Dining Room • Fitted Kitchen
 • Bathroom • Double Glazing, Gas CH
 • Driveway • Pleasant Gardens

OFFERS OVER £125,000



HADLEY HEATH MARDEN CLOSE
 • Modern Style Semi Detached • Large Plot
 • Hall, Lounge • Re-fitted Kitchen
 • Two Bedrooms • Re-fitted Bathroom, Driveway
 • Gas Central Heating System • Double Glazing

£129,950



WILLENHALL MEMORIAL CLOSE
 • Greatly Improved 2 Beds Modern Style Semi
 • Hall, Lounge, Newly Fitted Kitchen • Conservatory
 • Newly Re-fitted Bathroom • Gas CH • No Chain
 • Double Glazing, Car Port, Drive, Rear Garden

£125,000



WILLENHALL VAUGHAN ROAD
 • Improved 3 Bedroom Semi Detached Property
 • Hall, Lounge • Re-fitted Kitchen, Utility
 • Re-fitted Bathroom • Double Glazing
 • Gas Central Heating • Large Gardens

£110,000



SHORT HEATH POOLDES LANE
 • Period Two Bedroom Mid Terrace Property
 • Two Reception Rooms • Extended Kitchen
 • Bathroom • Double Glazing
 • Gas CH • Pleasant Rear Gardens • No Chain

OFFERS OVER £90,000



WILLENHALL NEWLANDS CLOSE
 • First Floor Two Bedrooms Maisonette
 • Hall, Lounge • Kitchen • Bathroom
 • Double Glazing • Gas Central Heating System
 • Garage • No Upward Chain

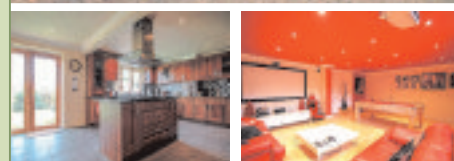
£78,500



Walsall
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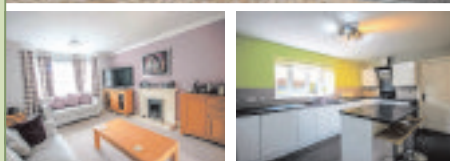
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Westhall Gate, Bloxwich

- Exclusive Three Storey Detached
- Four Bedrooms
- Master with En-Suite & Walk in Wardrobe
- Impressive Fitted Kitchen/Diner
- Lounge & Conservatory
- Dining Room
- Office Space
- Cinema/Entertainment Room
- Double Garage
- Private Rear Garden

Offers in Excess of £350,000



Marlpool Drive, Pelsall

- Executive Five Bedroom Detached
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Utility Room
- Guest Cloakroom W.C.
- Master Bedroom with En-Suite
- Four Further Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom
- Double Garage & Off Road Parking
- Front & Rear Gardens

£300,000



Stafford Road, Bloxwich

- Two Bedroom Detached Bungalow
- No Chain
- Ample Off Road Parking
- Conservatory
- Refitted Breakfast/Kitchen
- Two Reception Rooms

£240,000



Lincoln Road, Chuckery

- Much Extended & Improved Property
- Two Storey Rear Extension
- Delightful Rear Garden
- Block Paved Driveway
- Three Double Bedrooms
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Further potential to improve

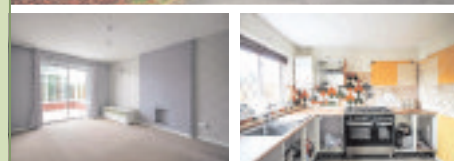
£200,000



Ingram Road, Blakenhall

- Four One Bedroom Maisonettes
- Self Contained with Private Entrances
- Allocated Parking Spaces
- Previously Let between £375-£390 each
- Total Income over £18,000
- Viewing Essential

Guide Price £200,000



Rochester Croft, Reedswood

- No Chain
- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Conservatory
- Off Road Parking
- Private Rear Garden
- Set in the Corner of a Cul-de-Sac
- Easy access to the M6
- Close to Reedswood Retail Park
- Viewing Essential
- Sought After Location

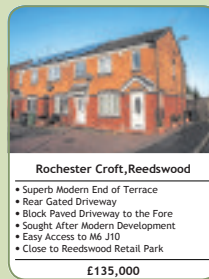
£120,000



Wilkes Avenue, Bently

- Traditional Detached Property
- Two Reception Rooms
- Side Garage
- Driveway
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Close to King Charles Primary School
- Great Potential to Improve/Extend
- Located Close to M6 J10

Offers in the Region Of £140,000



Rochester Croft, Reedswood

- Superb Modern End of Terrace
- Rear Gated Driveway
- Block Paved Driveway to the Fore
- Sought After Modern Development
- Easy Access to M6 J10
- Close to Reedswood Retail Park

£135,000



Long Lane, Newtown

- Extended Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Extended Lounge & Dining Room
- Fitted Kitchen
- Extended Bedrooms
- Overlooking Fields to Rear
- Driveway
- Downstairs WC
- Garage
- No Upward Chain
- Viewing Essential

Offers in Excess of £205,000



50 Park Road, Bloxwich

- No Upward Chain
- Currently Achieving £6300 Annual Rent
- Ground Floor Apartment
- Two Bedrooms
- En-Suite to Master
- Secure Gated Parking
- Other Apartments Available in the Block
- Viewing Essential

£115,000



Hollemeadow Avenue, Bloxwich

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Downstairs W.C.
- Family Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Ideal First Purchase
- Viewing Essential

£100,000



Fountains Way, Bloxwich

- Well Presented Mid Town House
- Off Road Parking
- Popular Mossley Development
- Lounge with Bay Window
- Open Plan Kitchen/Diner
- Three Bedrooms
- Modern Fitted Bathroom
- Attractive Rear Garden

£104,950



Field Road, Bloxwich

- Period Style Terrace
- Two Reception Rooms
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Rear Garden

Offers in Excess of £90,000

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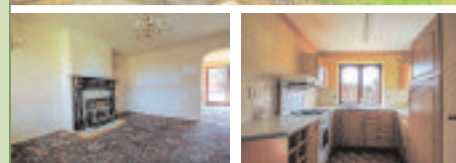




Walsall
01922 711444
 7 Queens Parade, Walsall, WS3 2EX



Goodchilds
 Estate Agents & Lettings



The Orchard, Bloxwich

- Sought After Location
- Close to Walsall Academy
- Modern Detached Property
- Corner of the Cul-de-Sac
- Ample Off Road Parking & Garage
- Modernisation Required
- Extended Kitchen/Utility Area
- Ground Floor WC
- En-Suite Shower to Master
- No Chain

£185,000



Vernon Way, Bloxwich

- Two/Three Bedroom Detached Bungalow
- One/Two Reception Rooms
- Fully Fitted Kitchen
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- Master Bedroom with En-Suite Shower Room
- Ample Off Road Parking
- Gated Access

Offers in the Region Of £180,000



Lord Street, Walsall

- No Upward Chain
- Queen Mary's & Blue Coat Schools Nearby
- Several Primary Schools locally
- Two Reception Rooms
- Garage
- Kitchen/Diner

£165,000



Sneyd Lane, Bloxwich

- NO UPWARD CHAIN
- EXTENDED LIVING KITCHEN AREA
- BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY
- PORCH
- DELIGHTFUL REAR GARDEN
- DETACHED GARAGE
- THREE GENEROUS BEDROOMS
- REFITTED BATHROOM
- UTILITY & GUEST CLOAKROOM
- Viewing Essential

£160,000



50 Park Road, Bloxwich

- Contemporary Apartment Block Built in 2008
- Currently Achieving £6600 Annual Rent
- Private Secure Parking
- Security Gated Entrance
- Spacious Second Floor Apartment

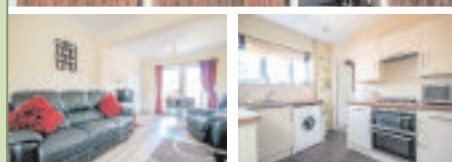
£125,000



Drake Road, Bloxwich

- No Chain
- Sought After Location
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Three Generous Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Popular Cul-de-Sac
- Near Bloxwich High Street

Offers in the Region Of £110,000



Irvine Road, Walsall

- Refurbished Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Porch
- Through Lounge/Diner
- Refitted Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms
- Modern Bathroom
- Detached Rear Garage
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Upgraded Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing

£115,000



Fountains Way, Bloxwich

- Well Presented Mid Town House
- Off Road Parking
- Popular Mossley Development
- Lounge with Bay Window
- Open Plan Kitchen/Diner
- Three Bedrooms
- Modern Fitted Bathroom
- Attractive Rear Garden
- Viewing Essential
- Sought After Location

£104,950



Waters Keep, Walsall

- Light and Airy Lounge
- Spacious Kitchen/Diner
- Downstairs W.C.
- Rear French Doors
- Three Spacious Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom

From £141,995



Hollemeadow Avenue, Bloxwich

- Three Bedroom Semi-Detached
- Lounge
- Fitted Kitchen
- Downstairs W.C.
- Family Bathroom
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Double Glazing
- Gas Central Heating
- Ideal First Purchase
- Viewing Essential

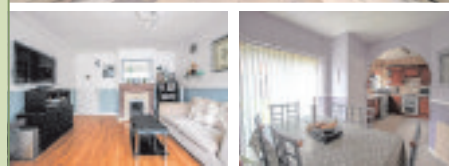
£100,000



West Bromwich Road, Walsall

- Three Bedroom Period Style Terrace
- Through Lounge/Diner
- Fitted Kitchen
- Ground Floor Bathroom
- Delightful Rear Garden
- Located Close to Whitehall School
- Gas Central Heating
- Suitable Buy-to-Let (Achieving £475pcm)
- Viewing Essential
- Sought After Location

£95,000



Penderel Street, Bloxwich

- No Chain
- Ideal First Time Purchase
- Suitable Buy-to-Let Investment
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Off Road Parking
- Gas Central Heating

Offers Over £100,000



Foster Street, Walsall

- Period Style Terrace
- Ideal First Time Buy
- Suitable Buy-to-Let
- Two Bedrooms
- Two Reception Rooms
- Fitted Kitchen

£75,000



Livingstone Road, Walsall

- Two Bedrooms
- Third Floor Flat
- Lounge
- Raised Dining Area
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Entrance Hall
- Double Glazing

In the region of £64,950

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- Lounge with Inglenook Fireplace
- Fitted Kitchen

Offers in the Region Of £450,000



New Street, Shelfield

- Three Bedroom Detached House
- Two Bedroom Self Contained Annexe
- Detached Double Garage
- Ample Off Road Parking
- Rear Garden
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing
- Spacious Bedrooms



Offers in the Region Of £270,000



Lichfield Road, Shire Oak

- Detached Family Home
- Close to Shire Oak Academy
- Excellent Transport Links to Local Towns
- Extension Potential
- Superb Front & Rear Gardens
- Side Garage
- Off Road Parking
- Ground Floor WC



Offers in the Region Of £220,000



Ashtree Road, Pelsall

- Three Bedroom Period Property
- Recently Refurbished
- Superb Kitchen/Conservatory
- En-Suite
- Many Original Features
- Detached Garage
- Close to Pelsall Village



£190,000



Norton Road, Pelsall

- Link Detached Bungalow
- Three Bedrooms
- Kitchen/Diner
- Bathroom
- Lounge
- Off Road Parking
- Landscaped rear garden
- Overlooking Pelsall Common

£190,000

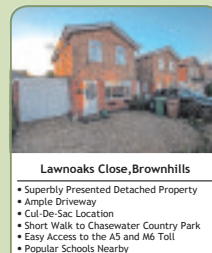


Church Road, Norton Canes

- Delightful Link Detached Family Home
- Breakfast Kitchen
- Spacious Lounge
- Three Bedrooms
- Refitted Bathroom
- Tandem Garage
- Front & Rear Gardens
- Gas Central Heating



£186,950



Lawnoaks Close, Brownhills

- Superbly Presented Detached Property
- Ample Driveway
- Cul-De-Sac Location
- Short Walk to Chasewater Country Park
- Easy Access to the A5 and M6 Toll
- Popular Schools Nearby

Offers in Excess of £180,000



Pelsall Road, Brownhills

- Spacious Period Style End of Terrace
- Extended Breakfast Kitchen
- Two Reception Rooms
- Victorian Style Luxury Bathroom
- Three Bedrooms
- Off Road Parking
- Delightful Rear Garden
- Gas Central Heating (recent new boiler)



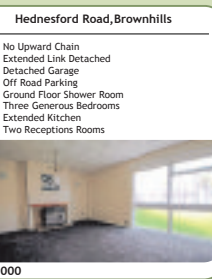
£179,950



Watling Street, Brownhills

- No Upward Chain
- Superb Extended Kitchen
- Lounge with Log Burner
- Second Reception Room
- Useful Loft Space
- Some Work Required

Offers in the Region Of £159,950



Hednesford Road, Brownhills

- No Upward Chain
- Extended Link Detached
- Detached Garage
- Off Road Parking
- Ground Floor Shower Room
- Three Generous Bedrooms
- Extended Kitchen
- Two Reception Rooms



£155,000



Moorthen Close, Brownhills

- No Upward Chain
- Recently Upgraded Internally
- Modern Fitted Kitchen/Diner
- Ground Floor WC
- Block Paved Driveway
- Detached Garage
- Rear Garden
- Gas Central Heating



Offers in Excess of £135,000



Littlelawns Close, Walsall Wood

- Cul-de-Sac Location
- Off Road Parking
- Superb Extended Living Kitchen
- Ground Floor Bedroom/Office
- Annexe/Office Space to Rear Garden
- Refitted Contemporary Bathroom
- Three Bedrooms
- Close to Shire Oak Academy
- Gas Central Heating & Double Glazing
- Viewing Essential

£160,000



NEW



Commonside, Brownhills

- No Upward Chain
- Off Road Parking
- Lounge/Diner
- Fitted Breakfast Kitchen
- Three Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Conservatory
- Rear Garden

£110,000



Hussey Road, Brownhills

- Three Bedrooms
- Spacious Lounge
- Sutton Coldfield
- Ground Floor Modern Bathroom
- Conservatory
- First Floor WC
- Private Rear Garden
- Popular Residential Area
- Off Road Parking
- Spacious Bedrooms

£129,950



Great Charles Street, Brownhills

- Beautifully Presented Semi-Detached
- Ideal First Time Buyer's Home
- Suitable Buy-to-Let
- Off Road Parking
- Ground Floor WC
- Close to Popular Schools
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing



£125,000



SOLD
Subject to Contract

Spring Close, Shelfield

- Three Double Bedrooms
- Deceptively Spacious Property
- No Chain
- Off Road Parking
- Private Rear Garden
- Sought After High Health Area

£125,000



Proffitt Close, Shire Oak

- No Chain
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Lounge/Diner
- Fitted Kitchen
- Fitted Bathroom
- Suitable Buy-to-Let
- Ideal First Time Buy
- Several Reputable Schools Nearby



£109,950



Lichfield Road, Shelfield

- Stunning 2 Bedroom Apartment
- Open Plan Lounge/Kitchen
- Contemporary Decor
- Modern Fitted Bathroom
- Gas Central Heating
- Double Glazing

£95,000

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104,950



RUDGE CL, WILLENHALL
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£105,000



PINFOLD STREET EXT, DARLASTON
Two Bed Semi Comprises Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Kitchen/ Diner, Ground Floor W.C And Modern Family Bathroom. The Property Also Benefits From UPVC D/G And G/C/H, Generous Rear Garden.

£109,995

QUEENS LEA



SHEPHERDS DR, WILLENHALL
Three Bed Semi Detached Having Lounge, Kitchen Diner, Ground Floor W.C, Family Bathroom, UPVC Double Glazing, Gas Central Heating, Driveway & Private Rear Garden.

£119,995

DARLASTON



MEMORY LANE, DARLASTON
Well Presented Three Bed Semi Detached Property Comprises Of Entrance Hallway, Lounge, Dining Area, Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom, G/C/H And D/G.

£129,995

ESSINGTON



THE GABLES, W-HAMPTON
Two Bed Mid Town House Having Entrance Hall, Lounge, Fitted Kitchen, Ground Floor W.C, Family Bathroom, Gas Central Heating, UPVC Double Glazing And Garage. Sought After Location.

£135,000

KINGFISHER ESTATE



WELLAND GROVE, W-HALL
Three Bedroom Detached Comprises Of Entrance Hall, Lounge, Dining Room, Fitted Kitchen, Family Bathroom. D/ Glazed, G/C/H. Gardens To Front & Rear, Driveway & Garage.

£145,995

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SOMERFORD PLACE, W-HALL
Spacious Three/ Four Bed Detached Property Having Entrance Hall, Two Reception Rooms, Generous Kitchen/ Diner, Shower Room, Cellar, Family Bathroom, UPVC D/G, G/C/H, Off Road Parking.

£184,995

SHORT HEATH



EZEKIEL LANE, WILLENHALL
Spacious Semi Detached Bungalow Comprises Of Hall, Fitted Kitchen, Lounge, D/Room, Family Bathroom, Two Ground Floor Bedroom, D/G & G/C/H. Potential Building Plot STPP.

£190,000

POOL HAYES



RAVENSCROFT RD, WILLENHALL
Three Bed Detached Having Hallway, Through Lounge, Spacious Kitchen/ Diner, Ground Floor W.C, Three Double Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, Loft Room. DG, GCH, Double Garage, Extensive Rear Garden

£259,995

COPPICE FARM



LOCHALSH GR, COPPICE FARM
Two Bed Detached Bungalow Having Entrance Hall, Spacious Lounge, Fitted Kitchen/ Diner with Utility, Conservatory, Shower Room. UPVC D/G, C/H, Detached Garage And Enclosed Rear Garden.

£269,995

MUST VIEW



CRAB LANE, WILLENHALL
Prestigious Extended Four Bed Detached Having Lounge, Sitting Room, Dining Kitchen, Conservatory, Utility, Galleried Landing, Master With En-Suite, Family Bathroom, Garage, Substantial Plot.

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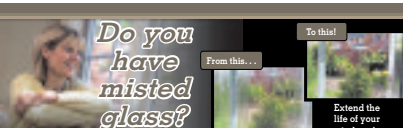
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3 Home & Services

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- Work with colleagues to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of all functions.
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Burntwood Town Council

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10 Personals

personal

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JAYNE, bored housewife, 42yrs looking for someone to spice up her days with some fun and jokes. Box: 4155728 Text only

MIKE, 6ft, medium to big build, WLTm lady for no strings fun, discretion assured. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421359

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IAN, 5ft8, medium build, OHAC, late 50s, likes most things, holidays, gardening, motorbikes, WLTm similar aged lady, 50-60, with nice personality. Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 421345

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YOUNG at heart male, smart, looks younger than age, likes socialising, looking for companionship & friendship. Text only Mailbox: 5412069

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In 2013 when they were fundraising for the new pavilion – Stephen Taft, Tony Banks and Daniel Kinsey



Outside the new pavilion, members of Springhill Cricket Club ready for the new season

Cricketers ready to spring into action

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Joe Edwards

“At some point in the summer, we will be hosting our grand opening for the building, which we see effectively as the relaunch of the club.”

Recently the club held their pre-season social event with a celebratory barbecue, for those who have helped out at the ground. “Gavin Williamson has been a massive supporter of our club. He has really helped along the way.”

They have a new mobile cage to replace the old static nets which took a battering over the winter.

Promotion

Springhill’s first XI remain in the Staffs Clubs Division Two this season. The seconds finished third in Division Four last term, behind winners Pelsall and Burntwood St Matthew’s.

The third XI were 13th in Division Five, but they did enter the league as a new team.

Kinsey is particularly hoping the second XI gain promotion this term and added: “This year is a bit of a consolidating year for us. Our main aim, though, is for our second team to go up a division.

“Our first team are a strong side so we expect them to possibly challenge at the top again in the second division.

“We want our second team, who are in the fourth division, to really push for promotion.

“The thirds are still a new side, last season was their first as a team, so hopefully they can hold their own too.”

SPRINGHILL Cricket Club are in high spirits as the new season gets under way. The club, in Lower Penn, held its first AGM in its new pavilion recently and now all three of their teams are geared up for the new campaign in the Staffordshire Cricket Club Championship.

Springhill CC was set up in 1949 and they have been based at their present site since 1950. They had been without a clubhouse for more than a decade, though, as their old wooden pavilion was demolished in 2005 after an arson attack.

Three years ago, the club was awarded £50,000 of National Lottery funding to develop its new clubhouse and back in September, they secured a £50,000 grant from Biffa Award to complete the second phase of the development.

Backing

Sport England were among others to provide financial backing and the building, which cost an approximate total of £180,000, is now in place, with just a few finishing touches to put to it.

Club secretary Dan Kinsey is relieved to now have a ‘solid’ facility and said: “It is a brand new clubhouse, a facility that wasn’t there at all previously. Our old wooden pavilion was burnt down 11 years ago, gutted in an arson attack, and it almost put the club to an end.

“The facility is solid, it is brand new. There are two changing rooms, which will have shower facilities. There are new toilet facilities, a big community room with a kitchen, and there will be a bar area too. We are putting the finishing touches to it now and, at some point in the summer, we will be hosting our grand opening for the building, which we see effectively as the relaunch of the club.”

The club is being supported by South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson and NatWest Bank as they prepare the playing surface and construct new training nets for the forthcoming season. Volunteers from NatWest were due to help club members to fit the new mobile nets.



Preparing for the new season, secretary Dan Kinsey with vice chairman Kevin Jones



New season and a new pavilion, at Springhill Cricket Club, Wolverhampton



There is lots of space inside the new pavilion which has two changing rooms



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Hatton hits back with boxing show

RICKY Hatton's prospects will take centre stage when professional boxing returns to Walsall Football Club on Saturday May 14. Paid pugilism will again be the order of the day in the Stadium Suite at the Banks's, with a boxing legend leading his fighters into battle. The former two-weight world champion has teamed up with Errol Johnson's Black Country Boxing to put on the show, writes Craig Birch.

Wedsbury's Sam Evans and big heavyweight Nathan Gorman co-headline the bill, with 'the Hitman' in their corner. Evans, 20, is campaigning in the light welterweight division where his mentor reigned by winning IBO, IBF and WBA 'super' world titles during his own career.

'Taffy' employs the same body punching techniques and has reeled off three straight wins, the first two in the Stadium Suite including a TKO on his debut. Gorman, from Nantwich in Cheshire, will first appear in the supporting cast to Billy Joe Saunders' first defence of the WBO world middleweight title against Max Bursak.

If all goes as planned and he comes out on top, he'll step back through the ropes just two weeks after that date at the Copper Box Arena in London. Like Evans, he'd be looking for win No 4.

Former British lightweight champion Martin Gethin and ex-English title challenger Steven Pearce will both appear on the under-card. Walsall's Gethin has also held the Midlands, English and IBF International belts over a productive 12-year career as a pro. Tickets for the show, called 'May-Hem', are on sale now. Standard passes are £30 with VIPs, at £60, including a two-course meal on tables of 10. For more information and to purchase, call the Walsall FC Box Office on 01922 651 414, extension 416.

St Johns look cued up to take title as they squeeze a win

IN the Aldridge and District Snooker League Premier Division, St Johns have one hand on the title after a narrow 3-2 deciding frame victory at struggling Stafford Road A with wins for most wins' youngster Jack Harris, Steve Barton and the decider from Mick Faulkner. Champions' Wednesfield Cons A look as though they will finish third this season after a 3-2 deciding frame victory at struggling Fishley Park with wins for Gary Haynes, Paul Harrison (48 & 52) and the decider from Tony Davis. Landywood SC A dented Aldridge Cons B's hopes of staying up when they whitewashed their opponents 5-0 at home.

In Division One leaders' Bentley Moor A went 12 points clear at the top with a solid 4-1 home victory against struggling Golden Cue C with frame wins for Scott McGregor, Richard Evans, Dave Boucher and most wins' man Phil Bush.

Blowix Memorial B in second appear to have blown their title chances after a surprise 3-2 reverse away at mid table Victoria B as the hosts' clinched victory with wins for Brian Wright, Neil Harper and Ian Beale.

Rhine time for athletes in duathlons

FIVE Black Country triathletes will be packing up their bikes and trainers and heading out to Kelkar, Germany at the weekend, to represent Great Britain in the European Duathlon Championships.

Getting into the saddle for the competition will be 35-year-old Scott Palmer, with youngsters Lauren Evans, 21, Jemma Evans, 17 and Millie Silk, 17, who will all compete in the sprint race while Rob Kennard, aged 50, is taking on other European athletes in the Standard distance race.

For Jemma and Millie, both A'Level students at King Edwards College in Stourbridge, and Scott, this will be their

ATHLETICS

first chance to represent their country and they are really looking forward to the experience, whilst Lauren and Rob will be building on their previous experience of racing with the GB team over the last couple of years.

All the athletes have been training with Black Country triathletes and in their own time and are hoping that the hard work will pay off in Germany.

The race courses are set alongside the River Rhine itself, near the amusement park Wunderland in the northern part of Germany near Dusseldorf.



Best of British, from left, triathletes Scott Palmer, Jemma Evans, Millie Silk, Lauren Evans and Rob Kennard

CONCERN OVER LACK OF SPARK

Oldham 1 Walsall 0

THERE is a sense something isn't quite right when you take a look at the League One table.

Out of nowhere, Bradford are now the team sitting in third position, Millwall have crept into fourth while Walsall have suddenly dropped to sixth and occupy the final play-off spot.

Supporters will hope it is just temporary. But having previously lost once on the road in 16 games, before Saturday's game, Jon Whitney's side suffered to back-to-back away defeats.

They are, of course, still fighting for a place in the top two. Six points from their games in hand will put them right back in the mix at a time second-placed Burton are also wobbling.

The concern is that Walsall have lost some of their spark in the past few weeks.

Whitney was bold in his team selection, with the Saddlers lining up in a 4-3-3 formation for the first time this season. It was a system based on flexibility with Romaine Sawyers, Anthony Forde and Jordy Hiwula given licence to roam wherever they liked in a bid to find pockets of space. The plan worked well, particularly in the first half, with Hiwula having the best chance before the break when he was played in on goal by Sawyers.

Sam Mantom and Forde also went close and while Oldham had their moments - particularly when Curtis Main flashed a half-volley wide - Walsall came off at the break deserving to be ahead. That was because Sawyers and co had managed to pop up in different areas and try to create. After the break though, the game was much more even.

John Sheridan, who has now lost just twice in his last 14 games in charge of the Latics, admitted he gave his players both barrels at half-time he was so disappointed with their display.

It meant that after the interval the game was a more cagey, uneventful affair. Oldham got themselves ahead, but as Whitney said in his post-match comments, they scored with what proved to be their only clear-cut chance of the half.

The problem for Walsall was that, once behind, they struggled to move the ball at a tempo quick



Everton loanee Matt Pennington, for Saddlers, and James Wilson tangle during the match

enough to grab an equaliser. Sawyers, who was the best player on the pitch in the first half, suddenly became ineffective.

And while the 24-year-old is a talent, too often this season Walsall's team performance has been a mirror image of how Sawyers himself is playing.

The St Kitts and Nevis international has become too integral with Whitney and his coaching staff needing to find a way to keep performances high when he isn't on song. The good news is that Whitney is willing to try things, as the 4-3-3 formation at Boundary Park showed.

And that ability to keep teams guessing will prove vital over the next few games.

But Walsall do need to return to winning ways quickly - not only because they should not be sixth in League One, but also because it is the most dangerous position to be in.

Walsall: Etheridge 6, Demetriou 7, Pennington 6, Downing 6, Taylor 6, Chambers 6, Mantom 6 (Morris), Sawyers 6, Forde 6 (Lalkovic), Hiwula 7, Bradshaw 6 (Cook). Subs not used: MacGillivray, Henry, Preston, Kinsella.

Oldham: Coleman, Dummigan, J Wilson, Gerrard, Holmes-Dennis, Palmer, Kelly, Dieng, Jones, Forte (Cassidy), Main. Subs not used: Brown, Mills, Croft, Cornell, Winchester, Wilson.

Attendance: 4,396.

Wood are woeful as Romans rule

Rocester 5 v 0 Walsall Wood

WOOD warmed up for the first leg of the League Cup semi-final at Lye Town on Thursday night with this appalling, error strewn, mistake riddled display that saw them put to the sword by a Rocester side who won for only the second time in nine games. No hiding from it, Wood were woeful.

The Romans went ahead on 14 minutes, the ball was played in from wide left, Liam Shaw held the ball up before laying it back to Brockley who calmly turned and scored just inside the right hand post with a crisp low drive.

Four minutes later Wood lost the ball on halfway, James Frost hit the ball into the middle, Oliver Roome holding off his marker as he ran on to slot the ball past a stranded Adam Jenkins in the Wood goal.

Shell shocked Wood regrouped and almost pulled one back on 29 minutes, a lovely one touch move across the face of the Romans box from left to right ended with Taylor Boyce running into the right of the box, keeper Richard Froggatt parried, but couldn't hold his vicious low drive that squirmed away to the far post, skipper Tom Land somehow keeping out Louis Harris' shot on goal. Wood struggled to reduce the deficit at the start of the second half but the game was over as a contest on 55 minutes, from a Romans left wing cross Brown got in a header that was cleared off the line, only for a scramble to develop and Brown forced the ball home from close range. Goals then followed on 62 and 77 minutes.

A late siege on the home goal summed up Wood's afternoon.

Rocester: Froggatt, Frost, Allen, Land (c), Yeomans, Wadsworth, Rooms, Brown, Shaw, Brockley, Riddell, Nutt, Hind, Mottershead, Martin, Binks.
Walsall Wood: Jenkins, Deakin, Beckett, Hildreth, Birch, L. Harris, Griffiths, H. Harris (c), Butlin, Taylor Boyce, Evans, Wright, Black, Ricketts, Jackson, Curriers.

Young swimmers find joy at meet

GREAT Barr Children continued their success at Broadway Swimming Club competing at the weekend at the City of Stoke Open Meet.

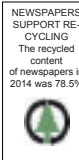
Nine-year-old Blake Webb was the star of the weekend in his first open meet, winning three golds in the 100 IM, 50 M Fly and 50 M Breaststroke. Jensen Proctor (10 years) wins Silver in the 100 IM.

Callum Bird, George Pattinson, Matthias Henry all scored personal best times in their events.

Harriet Shepherd and Megan Butler swam 10 individual races each and got six personal best times.

★★★

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